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WORLD VOICES

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"This is my task: Amid Discordant strife
To keep a clean, sweet center in my life,
And though the human orchestra may be
Playing all out of key,
To tune my soul to symphonies above
And sound the note of love.
This is my task."

"THIS IS MY TASK"

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WORLD VOICES

by

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Author of "Maurine," "Poems of Passion," "Poems of Pleasure," etc.

Illustrations by

William de Leftwich Dodge
Will Foster
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T. D. Skidmore
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Paul Julien Meylan
J. Scott Williams
William Hottinger
W. T. Benda
John Alonzo Williams
Dalton Stevens

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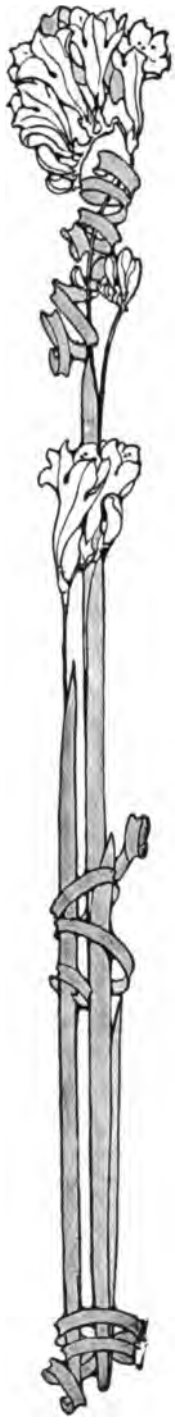

WORLD VOICES

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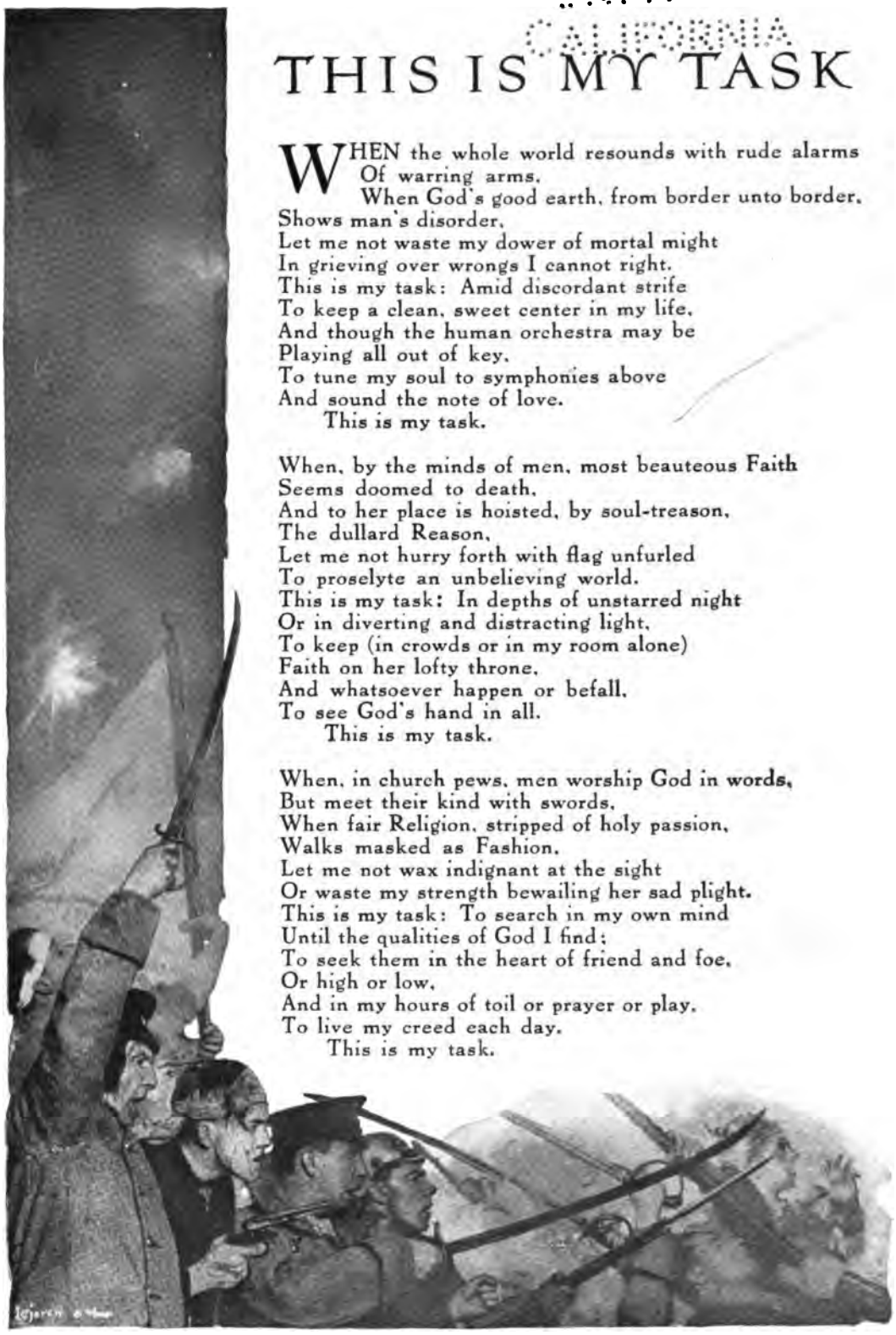
THIS IS MY TASK

WHEN the whole world resounds with rude alarms
Of warring arms,
When God's good earth, from border unto border,
Shows man's disorder,
Let me not waste my dower of mortal might
In grieving over wrongs I cannot right.
This is my task: Amid discordant strife
To keep a clean, sweet center in my life,
And though the human orchestra may be
Playing all out of key,
To tune my soul to symphonies above
And sound the note of love.
This is my task.

When, by the minds of men, most beauteous Faith
Seems doomed to death,
And to her place is hoisted, by soul-treason,
The dullard Reason,
Let me not hurry forth with flag unfurled
To proselyte an unbelieving world.
This is my task: In depths of unstarred night
Or in diverting and distracting light,
To keep (in crowds or in my room alone)
Faith on her lofty throne,
And whatsoever happen or befall,
To see God's hand in all.
This is my task.

When, in church pews, men worship God in words,
But meet their kind with swords,
When fair Religion, stripped of holy passion,
Walks masked as Fashion,
Let me not wax indignant at the sight
Or waste my strength bewailing her sad plight.
This is my task: To search in my own mind
Until the qualities of God I find;
To seek them in the heart of friend and foe,
Or high or low,
And in my hours of toil or prayer or play,
To live my creed each day.
This is my task.



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THE FORECAST

It may be that I dreamed a dream; it may be that I saw
The forecast of a time to come, by some supernal law.

I SEEMED to dwell in this same world, and in this modern time;
All strife had ceased; men were disarmed; and quiet Peace had made
A thousand avenues for toil, in place of War's grim trade.
From east to west, from north to south, where highways smooth and broad
Tied State to State, the waste lands bloomed like garden spots of God.
There were no beggars in the streets; there were no unemployed;
For each man owned his plot of ground, and labored and enjoyed.
Sweet children grew like garden flowers, all strong and fair to see;
And when I marvelled at the sight, thus spake a Voice to me;
"All Motherhood is now an art, the greatest art on earth;
And nowhere is there known the crime of one unwelcome birth.
From rights of parentage the sick and sinful are debarred;
For Matron Science keeps our house, and at the door stands guard.
We know the cure for darkness lies in letting in the light;
And Prisons are replaced by Schools, where wrong views change to right.
The wisdom, knowledge, study, thought, once bent on beast and sod,
We give now to the human race, the highest work of God;
And, as the gardener chooses seed, so we select with care;
And as our Man Plant grows, we give him soil and sun and air.
There are no slums; no need of alms; all men are opulent,
For Mother Earth belongs to them, as was the First Intent."

It may be that I dreamed a dream; it may be that I saw
The forecast of a time to come, by some supernal law.

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THINKING OF CHRIST

THINKING of Christ and hearing what men say
Anent His Second coming some near day
Unto the Me of (me), I turned to ask,
What can we do for Him, and by what task
Or through what sacrifice, can we proclaim
Our mighty love, and glorify His name?

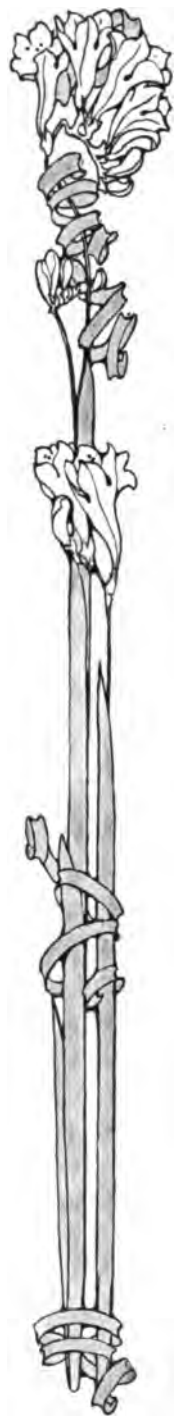
Whereon myself replied (thinking of Christ):
Has not God's glory unto Him sufficed?
What need has He of temples that men raise?
What need has He of any songs of praise?
Not sacrifice nor offerings needs He.
(Thinking of Christ, so spake Myself to me.)

The rivers from the mountain do not try
To feed the source from which they gain supply;
They pay their debt by flowing on and down,
And carrying comfort to the field and town.
They scatter joy and beauty on their course,
In gratitude to the Eternal Source.

And thus should we (thinking of Christ) bestow
The full sweet tides of love that through us flow
Upon earth's weaker creatures. To the less
Must flow the greater, would we lift and bless
Christ is the mountain source; each heart a river;
The thirsting meadows need us, not the Giver.

Thinking of Christ, let us proclaim His worth
By gracious deeds to mortals on this earth;
And while we wait His coming, let us bring
Sweet love and pity to the humblest thing,
And show our voiceless kin of air and sod
The mercy of the Universal God.

Not by long prayers, though prayers renew our grace—
Not by tall spires, though steeples have their place—
Not by our faith, though faith is glorious—
Can we prove Christ, but *by the love in us.*
Mercy and love and kindness—seek these three.
Thus (thinking of Christ) Myself said unto me.



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The Superwoman

WHAT will the superwoman be, of whom we sing—
She who is coming over the dim border
Of far To-morrow, after earth's disorder
Is tidied up by Time? What will she bring
To make life better on tempestuous earth?
How will her worth
Be greater than her forebears? What new power
Within her being will burst into flower?

She will bring beauty, not the transient dower
Of adolescence which departs with youth,
But beauty based on knowledge of the truth
Of its eternal message and the source
Of its all potent force.
Her outer being by the inner thought
Shall into lasting loveliness be wrought.

She will bring virtue; but it will not be
The pale, white blossom of cold chastity
Which hides a barren heart. She will be human—
Not saint or angel—but the superwoman,
Mother and mate and friend of superman.

She will bring strength to aid the larger Plan,
Wisdom and strength and sweetness all combined,
Drawn from the Cosmic Mind—
Wisdom to act, and courage to attain,
And sweetness that finds growth in joy or pain.

She will bring that large virtue, self-control,
And cherish it as her supremest treasure.
Not at the call of sense or for Man's pleasure
Will she invite from space an embryo soul,
To live on earth again in mortal fashion,
Unless love stirs her with divinest passion.

To motherhood, she will bring common sense—
That most uncommon virtue. She will give
Love that is more than she-wolf violence,
(Which slaughters others that its own may live),
Love that will help each little tendril mind
To grow and climb;
Love that will know the lordliest use of Time
Is training human egos to be kind.

She will be formed to guide, but not to lead—
Leaders are ever lonely—and her sphere
Will be that of the comrade and the mate,
Loved, loving, and with insight fine and clear,
Which casts its search-light on the course of fate.
And to the leaders says, "Proceed" or "Wait."

And best of all, she will bring holy faith
To penetrate the shadowy world of Death,
And show the road beyond it, bright and broad,
That leads straight up to God.

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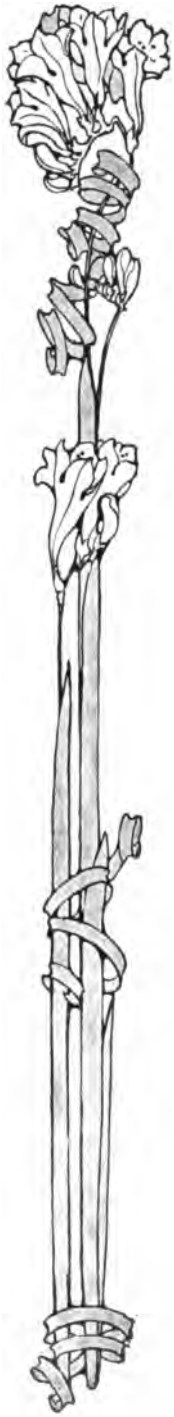
THE PRICE HE PAID



I SAID I would have my fling,
And do what a young man may;
And I didn't believe a thing
That the parsons have to say.
I didn't believe in a God
That gives us blood like fire,
Then flings us into hell because
We answer the call of desire.

And I said: "Religion is rot,
And the laws of the world are nil;
For the bad man is he who is caught
And cannot foot his bill.
And there is no place called hell;
And heaven is only a truth
When a man has his way with a maid
In the fresh keen hour of youth.

"And money can buy us grace,
If it rings on the plate of the church;
And money can neatly erase
Each sign of a sinful smirch."
For I saw men everywhere,
Hotfooting the road of vice;
And women and preachers smiled on them
As long as they paid the price.

So I had my joy of life:
I went the pace of the town;
And then I took me a wife,
And started to settle down,
I had gold enough and to spare
For all of the simpler joys
That belong with a house and a home
And a brood of girls and boys.

I married a girl with health
And virtue and spotless fame.
I gave in exchange my wealth
And a proud old family name.
And I gave her the love of a heart
Grown sated and sick of sin!
My deal with the devil was all cleaned up,
And the last bill handed in.

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She was going to bring me a child,
And when in labour she cried
With love and fear I was wild—
But now I wish she had died,
For the son she bore me was blind
And crippled and weak and sore!
And his mother was left a wreck,
It was *so she* settled my score.

I said I must have my fling,
And they knew the path I would go;
Yet no one told me a thing
Of what I needed to know.
Folks talk too much of a soul
From heavenly joys debarred—
And not enough of the babes unborn,
By the sins of their fathers scarred.

PRAISE DAY

Let us halt now for a space in our hurrying
Let us take time to look up and look out.
Let us refuse for a spell to be worrying;
Let us decline both to question or doubt.
If one goes caviling
Hair splitting, flaw hunting, ready for strife,
All the best pleasure is missed in the traveling
Onward through life.

Just for today we will put away sorrowing
Just for today not a tear shall be shed.
Nor will we fear anything or go borrowing
Pain from the future by profitless dread.
Thought shall go frolicking
Pleasuring, treasuring, everything bright;
Tasting the joy that is found just in rolicking
On through the light.

Just for today all the ills that need bettering
We will omit from our notebook of mind.
All that is good we will mark by red lettering;
Those things alone we are seeking to find.
Things to be sad over,
Pine over, whine over, pass them, I say.
Nothing is noted save what we are glad over—
This is Praise Day.

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COMPASSION

HE was a failure; and one day he died.
Across the border of the mapless land
He found himself among a sad-eyed band
Of disappointed souls: they, too, had tired
And missed their purpose. With one voice they cried
Unto the shining Angel in command
"Oh, lead us not before our Lord to stand
For we are failures, failures. Let us hide."

Yet on the Angel fared until they stood
Before the Master. (Even his holy place
The hideous noises of the earth assailed.)

Christ reached his arms out to the trembling brood,
With God's vast sorrow in his listening face.
"Come unto me," he said, "I, too, have failed."

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GYPSYING

GYPSYING, gypsying, through the world together,
Never mind the way we go, never mind what port.
Follow trails, or fashion sails, start in any weather:
While we journey hand in hand, everything is sport.

Gypsying, gypsying, leaving care and worry;
Never mind the "if" and "but" (words for coward lips).
Put them out with "fear" and "doubt," in the pack with "hurry,"
While we stroll like vagabonds forth to trails, or ships.

Gypsying, gypsying, just where fancy calls us;
Never mind what others say, or what others do.
Everywhere or foul or fair, liking what befalls us;
While you have me at your side, and while I have you.

Gypsying, gypsying, camp by hill or hollow;
Never mind the why of it, since it suits our mood.
Go or stay, and pay our way, and let those who follow
Find, upspringing from the soil, some small seed of good.

Gypsying, gypsying, through the world we wander;
Never mind the rushing years that have come and gone,
There must be for you and me, lying over Yonder,
Other lands, where side by side we can gypsy on.

THE VOICE

I dreamed a Voice, of one God-authorized,
Cried loudly thro' the world, "Disarm! Disarm!"
And there was consternation in the camps;
And men who strutted under braid and lace
Beat on their medalled breasts, and wailed, "Undone!"
The word was echoed from a thousand hills,
And shop and mill and factory and forge,
Where throve the awful industries of earth,
Hushed into silence. Scrawled upon the doors,
The passer read, "Peace bids her children starve."
But foolish women clasped their little sons
And wept for joy, not reasoning like men.

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Again the Voice commanded: "Now go forth
And build a world for Progress and for Peace.
This work has waited since the earth was shaped;
But men were fighting and they could not toil.
The needs of life outnumber needs of death;
Leave death with God. Go forth, I say, and build."

And then a sudden, comprehensive joy
Shone in the eyes of men; and one who thought
Only of conquests and of victories
Woke from his gloomy reverie and cried,
"Ay, come and build! I challenge all to try.
And I will make a world more beautiful
Than Eden was before the serpent came."
And like a running flame on western wilds,
Ambition spread from mind to listening mind,
And lo! the looms were busy once again,
And all the earth resounded with men's toil.

Vast palaces of Science graced the world;
Their banquet-tables spread with feasts of truth
For all who hungered. Music kissed the air
Once rent with boom of cannons. Statues gleamed
From wooded rays where ambushed armies hid
In times of old. The sea and air were gay
With shining sails that soared from land to land.
A universal language of the world
Made nations kind, and poverty was known
But as a word marked *obsolete*, like war.
The arts were kindled with celestial fire.

Now poets sang so Homer's fame grew dim;
And brush and chisel gave the wondering race
Sublimer treasures than old Greece displayed,
Men differed still; fierce argument arose;
For men are human in this human sphere;
But unarmed Arbitration stood between,
And reason settled in a hundred hours
What War disputed for a hundred years.

Oh, that a Voice of one God-authorized
Might cry to all mankind, "Disarm! Disarm!"

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The Younger Born

The modern English-speaking young girl is the astonishment of the world and the despair of the older generation. Nothing like her has ever been seen or heard before. Alike in drawing-rooms and the amusement places of the people, she defies long-established conventions in dress, speech, and conduct. She is bold, yet not immoral. She is immodest, yet she is chaste. She has no ideals, yet she is kind and generous. She is an anomaly and a paradox.

WE are the little daughters of Time and the World, his wife;
We are not like the children born in their younger life;
We are marred with our mother's follies and torn with our father's strife.

We are the little daughters of the modern World
And Time, her spouse.
She had brought many children to our father's house
Before we came, when both our parents were content
With simple pleasures and with quiet, homely ways.
Modest and mild
Were the fair daughters born to them in those fair days,
Modest and mild.

But Father Time grew restless and longed for a swifter pace,
And our mother pushed out beside him at the cost of her tender grace,
And life was no more living, but just a headlong race.

And we are wild——
Yea, wild are we, the younger born of the World,
Into life's vortex hurled.
With the milk of our mother's breast
We drank her own unrest,
And we learned our speech from Time,
Who scoffs at the things sublime.
Time and the World have hurried so,
They could not help their younger born to grow.
We only follow, follow where they go.

They left their high ideals behind them as they ran;
There was but one goal—pleasure for Woman or for Man,
And they robbed the nights of slumber to lengthen the days' brief span.

We are the demi-virgins of the modern day;
All evil on the earth is known to us in thought,
But yet we do it not.
We bare our beauteous bodies to the gaze of men;
We lure them, tempt them, lead them on, and then
Lightly we turn away.
By strong, compelling passion we are never stirred;
To us it is a word——
A word much used when tragic tales are told.
We are the younger born, yet we are very old

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In understanding, and our knowledge makes us bold.
Boldly we look at life,
Loving its stress and strife,
And hating all conventions that may mean restraint,
Yet shunning sin's black taint.

We know wine's taste;
And the young-maiden bloom and sweetness of our lips
Is often in eclipse,
Under the brown weed's stain.
Yet we are chaste.
We have no large capacity for joy or pain,
But an insatiable appetite for pleasure.
We have no use for leisure,
And never learned the meaning of that word "repose."
Life, as it goes,
Must spell excitement for us, be the cost what may.
Speeding along the way,
We ofttimes pause to do some generous little deed
And fill the cup of need;
For we are kind at heart,
Though with less heart than head.
Unmoral, not immoral, when the worst is said,
We are the product of the modern day.

We are the little daughters of Time and the World, his wife;
We are not like the children born in their younger life;
We are marred with our mother's follies and torn with our father's strife.

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CONTRASTS

A GREAT gold sun in the skies above us;
A great green world about;
Fair winds out,
And a blue sea flowing;
And boats with white sails coming and going.
For the friends we love and the friends who love us,
Sing ho—sing—
Life is a goodly thing.

(*The prison stands against the sky*
A monument of gloom;
The dead are there who did not die
Yet dwell within a tomb,
If summers come or winters go
They do not seem to care, or know;
They do not sing, they do not sing.)

Birds in the orchard and bees in the clover
Rainbows abloom in the sod;
Lovers abroad;
And somebody singing
An old sweet air on taut strings ringing,
And off in the woodlands the cry of a lover.
Sing ho, I say—
Life is a holiday.

(*The Factory offends the air—*
With shrill imperious calls;
And little children hurrying there
Are lost within its walls;
It does not matter much someway
If bright or dark the outer day.
They do not sing, they do not sing.)

BELGIUM

Ruined? Destroyed? Ah, no; though blood in rivers ran
Down all her ancient streets; though treasures manifold,
Love-wrought, time-mellowed, and beyond the price of gold
Are lost, yet Belgium's star shines still in God's vast plan.

Rarely have kings been great, since kingdoms first began;
Rarely have great kings been great men when all was told.
But, by the lighted torch in mailed hands, behold
Immortal Belgium's immortal king, and man.

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IF I WERE A MAN, A YOUNG MAN

IF I were a man, a young man and knew what I know today,
I would look in the eyes of Life undaunted
By any Fate that might threaten me.
I would give to the world what the world most wanted—
Manhood that knows it can do and be;
Courage that dares, and faith that can see
Clear into the depths of the human soul,
And find God there, and the ultimate goal—
If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know today

If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know today,
I would think of myself as the masterful creature
Of all the masterful plan;
The Formless Cause, with form and feature;
The Power that heeds not limit or ban;
Man, wonderful man.
I would do good deeds, and forget them straightway;
I would weave my woes into ropes and climb
Up to the heights of the helper's gateway;
And Life should serve me, and Time,
And I would sail out, and out, and find
The treasures that lie in that deep sea,
Mind.
I would dream, and think, and act;
I would work, and love, and pray,
Till each dream and vision grew into a fact
If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know today.

If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know today,
I would guard my passions as Kings guard treasures,
And keep them high and clean.
(For the will of a man, with his passions measures;
It is strong as they are keen.)
I would think of each woman as some one's mother;
I would think of each man as my own blood brother,
And speed him along on his way.
And the glory of life in this wonderful hour
Should fill me and thrill me with conscious power,
If I were a man, a young man and knew what I know today.

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It May Be

Let us be silent for a little while;
Let us be still and listen. We may hear
Echoes from other worlds not far away.

City on city rising, steeple out-topping steeple,
Gaining and hoarding and spending, and armies on battle bent,
People and people and people, and ever more human people—
This is not all of creation, this is not all that was meant!
Earth on its orbit spinning,
This is not end nor beginning;
That is but one of a trillion spheres out into the ether hurled:
We move in a zone of wonder,
And over our planet and under,
Are infinite orders of beings and marvels of world on world.

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There may be moving among us, curious people and
races,
Folk of the fourth dimension, folk of the vast star
spaces.
They may be trying to reach us,
They may be longing to teach us
Things we are longing to know,
If it is so,
Voices like these are not heard in earth's riot,
Let us be quiet.

Classes with classes disputing, nation warring with
nation,
Building and owning and seeking to lead—this is not
all!
Endless the works of creation.
There may be waiting our call
Beings in numberless legions,
Dwellers in rarefied regions,
Journeying Godward like us,
Alist for a word to be spoken,
Awatch for a sign or a token,
If it be thus,
How they must grieve at our riotous noise
And the things we call duties and joys!

Let us be silent for a little while;
Let us be still and listen. We may hear
Echoes from other worlds not far away

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AN OLD SONG

Two roadways lead from This land to That; and one is the road of Prayer;
And one is the road of Old Time Songs, and every note is a stair.

A SHABBY old man with a music machine on the sordid city street,—
But suddenly earth seemed Arcady, and life grew young and sweet
For the city street fled and the world was green and a little house stood by the sea;
And she came singing a martial air (she who was peace itself);
She brought back with her the old strange charm of mingled pathos and glee;
With her eyes of a child in a woman's face and her soul of a saint in an elf.

She had been gone for many a year, they tell us it is not far,—
That silent place where the dear ones go but it might as well be a star.
Yes it might as well be a distant star, as a beautiful Near-By-Land.
If we hear no voice, and see no face, and feel no touch of a hand.

But now she had come, for I saw her there, and she looked so blithe and young;
(Not white and still as I saw her last) and the rose that she wore was red;
And her voice soared up in a birdlike trill, at the end of the song she sung,
And she mimicked a soldier's warlike stride and tossed back her dear little head.

She had been gone for many a year, and never came back before;
But I think she dwells in a Near-By-Land since a song jarred open the door;
Yes I think it is surely a Near-By-Land, that place where our loved ones are
For the song would never have reached her ear had she been on a distant star.

Two roadways lead from This land to That; and one is the road of Prayer;
And one is the road of Old Time Songs, and every note is a stair.

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ARISTARCHUS

(The Name of the Mountain in the Moon)

IT was long and long ago our love began;
It is something all unmeasured by time's span:
In an era and a spot, by the Modern World forgot,
We were lovers, ere God named us, Maid and Man.

Like the memory of music made by streams,
All the beauty of that other lifetime seems;
But I always thought it so, and at last I know, I know,
We were lovers in the land of Silver Dreams.

When the moon was at the full, I found the place;
Out and out, across the seas of shining space,
On a quest that could not fail, I unfurled my memory's sail
And cast anchor in the Bay of Love's First Grace.

At the foot of Aristarchus lies this bay
(Oh! the wonder of that mountain far away)
And the Land of Silver Dreams all about it shines and gleams,
Where we loved before God fashioned night or day.

We were souls, in eerie bodies made of light;
We were winged, and we could speed from height to height.
And we built a nest called Hope, on the sheer Moon Mountain Slope,
Where we sat and watched new worlds wheel into sight.

And we saw this little planet known as Earth,
When the mighty Mother Chaos gave it birth;
But in Love's conceit we thought all those worlds from space were brought,
For no greater aim or purpose than our mirth.

And we laughed in love's abandon, and we sang,
Till the echoing peals of Aristarchus rang,
As hot hissing comets came, and white suns burst into flame,
And a myriad worlds from out the darkness sprang.

I can show you, when the moon is at its best,
Aristarchus, and the spot we made our nest.
Oh! I always wondered why, when the moon was in the sky
I was stirred with such strange longing and unrest.

And I knew the subtle beauty and the force
Of our love was never bounded by Earth's course.
So with Memory's sail unfurled, I went cruising past this world.
And I followed till I traced it to its source.

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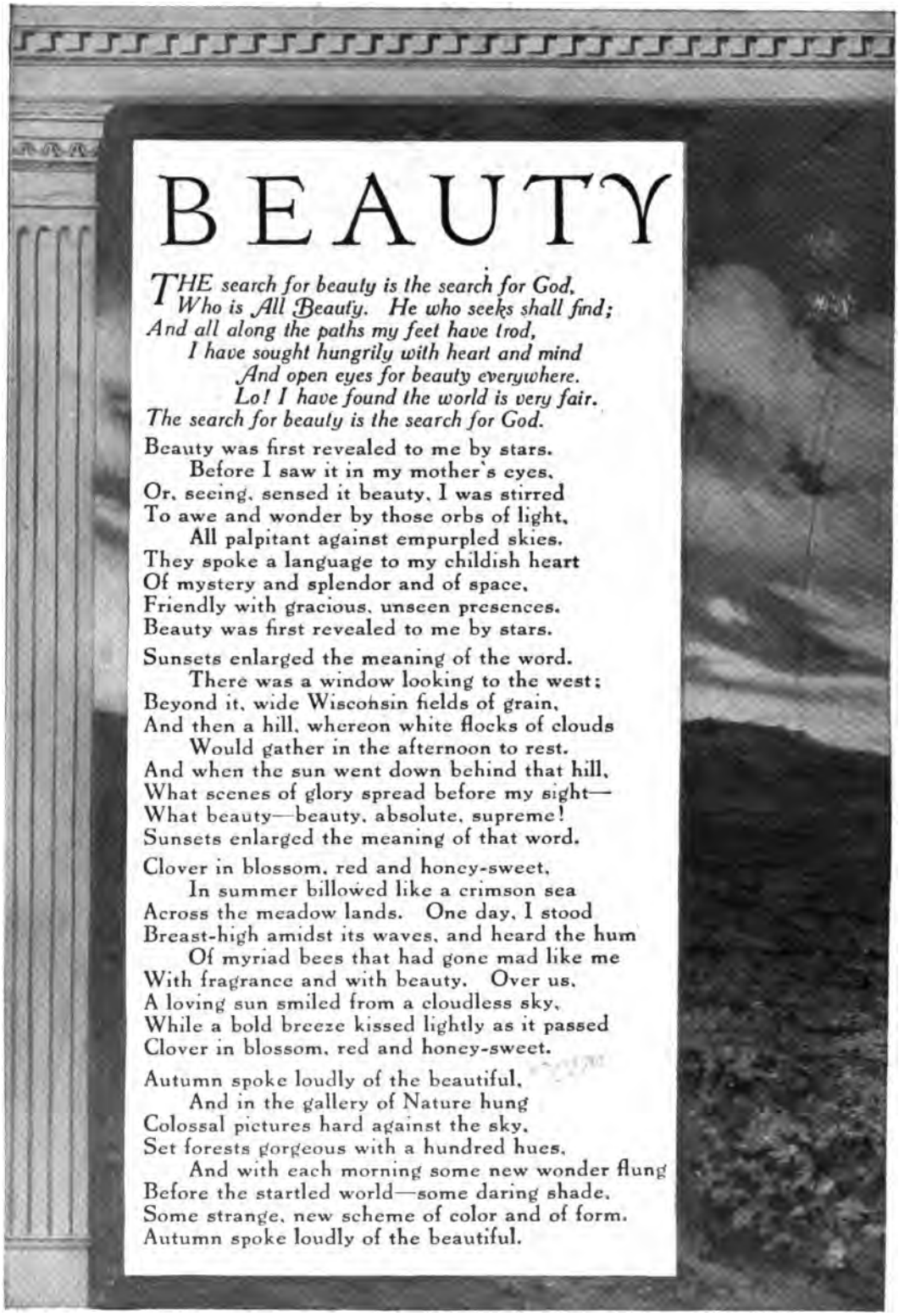

BEAUTY

THE search for beauty is the search for God,
Who is All Beauty. He who seeks shall find;
And all along the paths my feet have trod,
I have sought hungrily with heart and mind
And open eyes for beauty everywhere.
Lo! I have found the world is very fair.
The search for beauty is the search for God.

Beauty was first revealed to me by stars.
Before I saw it in my mother's eyes,
Or, seeing, sensed it beauty, I was stirred
To awe and wonder by those orbs of light,
All palpitant against empurpled skies.
They spoke a language to my childish heart
Of mystery and splendor and of space,
Friendly with gracious, unseen presences.
Beauty was first revealed to me by stars.

Sunsets enlarged the meaning of the word.
There was a window looking to the west;
Beyond it, wide Wisconsin fields of grain,
And then a hill, whereon white flocks of clouds
Would gather in the afternoon to rest.
And when the sun went down behind that hill,
What scenes of glory spread before my sight—
What beauty—beauty, absolute, supreme!
Sunsets enlarged the meaning of that word.

Clover in blossom, red and honey-sweet,
In summer billowed like a crimson sea
Across the meadow lands. One day, I stood
Breast-high amidst its waves, and heard the hum
Of myriad bees that had gone mad like me
With fragrance and with beauty. Over us,
A loving sun smiled from a cloudless sky,
While a bold breeze kissed lightly as it passed
Clover in blossom, red and honey-sweet.

Autumn spoke loudly of the beautiful,
And in the gallery of Nature hung
Colossal pictures hard against the sky,
Set forests gorgeous with a hundred hues,
And with each morning some new wonder flung
Before the startled world—some daring shade,
Some strange, new scheme of color and of form.
Autumn spoke loudly of the beautiful.

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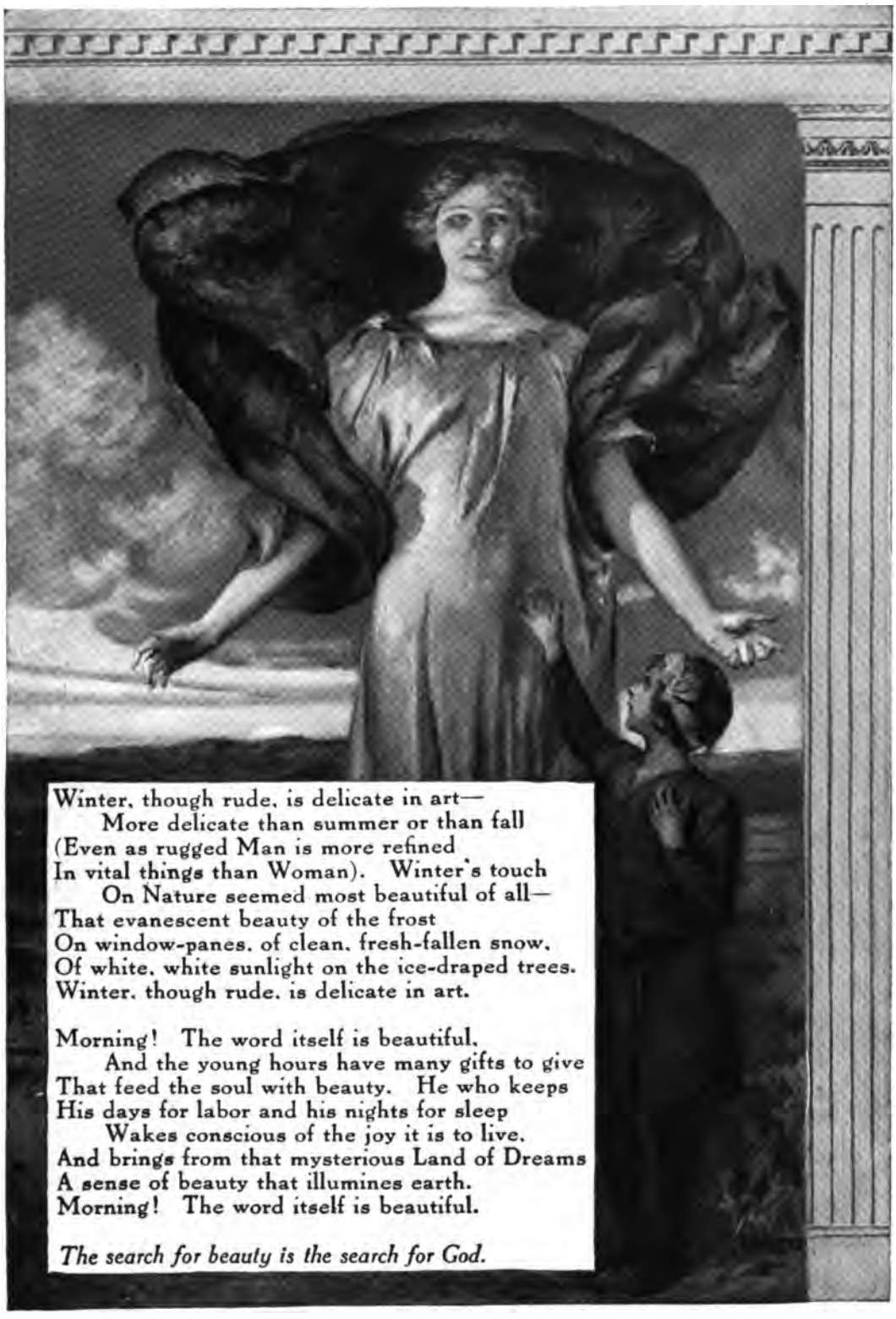

Winter, though rude, is delicate in art—
More delicate than summer or than fall
(Even as rugged Man is more refined
In vital things than Woman). Winter's touch
On Nature seemed most beautiful of all—
That evanescent beauty of the frost
On window-panes, of clean, fresh-fallen snow,
Of white, white sunlight on the ice-draped trees.
Winter, though rude, is delicate in art.

Morning! The word itself is beautiful,
And the young hours have many gifts to give
That feed the soul with beauty. He who keeps
His days for labor and his nights for sleep
Wakes conscious of the joy it is to live.
And brings from that mysterious Land of Dreams
A sense of beauty that illumines earth.
Morning! The word itself is beautiful.

The search for beauty is the search for God.

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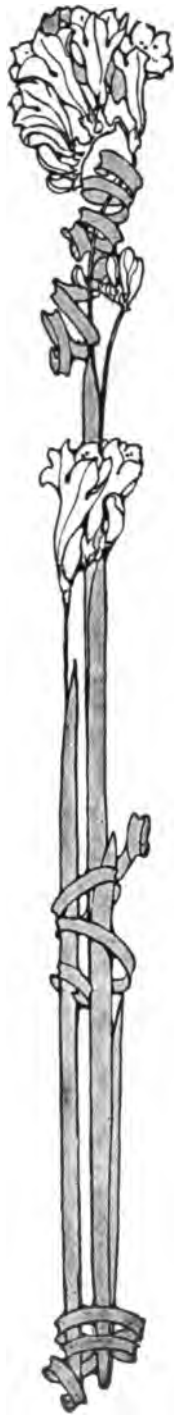
THE EARTH



TO build a house, with love for architect,
Ranks first and foremost in the joys of life.
And in a tiny cabin, shaped for two,
The space for happiness is just as great
As in a palace. What a world were this
If each soul born, received a plot of ground;
A little plot, whereon a home might rise,
And beauteous green things grow!
We give the dead,
The idle vagrant dead, the Potter's Field;
Yet to the living not one inch of soil.
Nay, we take from them soil, and sun, and air,
To fashion slums and hell-holes for the race.
And to our poor we say, "Go starve and die
As beggars die; so gain your heritage."

This was a most uncanny dream; I thought the wraiths
of those
Long buried in the Potter's Field, in shredded shrouds
arose;
They said, "Against the will of God
We have usurped the fertile sod.
Now will we make it yield."

Oh! but it was a gruesome sight, to see those phantoms
toil;
Each to his own small garden bent; each spaded up the
soil;
(I never knew Ghosts labored so.)
Each scattered seed, and watched, till lo!
The Graves were opulent.

Then all among the fragrant greens, the silent spectral
train,
Walked, as if breathing in the breath of plant, and
flower, and grain,
(I never knew Ghosts loved such things;
Perchance it brought back early springs
Before they thought of death.)

"The mothers' milk for living babes; the earth for
living hosts;
The clean flame for the un-souled dead." (Oh,
strange the words of Ghosts.)
"If we had owned this little spot
In life, we need not lie and rot
Here in a pauper's bed "

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THE WHITE MAN

WHEREVER the white man's feet have trod
(Oh, far does the white man stray)
A bold road rifles the virginal sod,
And the forest wakes out of its dream of God,
To yield him the right of way.
For this is the law: *By the power of thought,*
For worse, or for better, are miracles wrought.

Wherever the white man's pathway leads,
(Far, far has that pathway gone)
The earth is littered with broken creeds—
And always the dark man's tent recedes,
And the white man pushes on.
For this is the law: *Be it good or ill,*
All things must yield to the stronger will.

Wherever the white man's light is shed,
(Oh, far has that light been thrown)
Though nature has suffered and beauty bled,
Yet the goal of the race has been thrust ahead,
And the might of the race has grown.
For this is the law: *Be it cruel or kind,*
The Universe sways to the power of mind.

AFTER

Over the din of battle,
Over the cannons' rattle,
Over the strident voices of men and their dying groans,
I hear the falling of thrones.

Out of the wild disorder
That spreads from border to border,
I see a new world rising from ashes of ancient towns;
And the Rulers wear no crowns.

Over the blood-charged water,
Over the fields of slaughter,
Down to the hidden vaults of Time, where lie the worn-out things
I see the passing of Kings.

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THE TRINITY

MUCH may be done with the world we are in,
Much with the race to better it;
We can unfetter it,
Free it from chains of the old traditions;
Broaden its viewpoint of virtue and sin;
Change its conditions
Of labor and wealth;
And open new roadways to knowledge and health.
Yet some things ever must stay as they are
While the sea has its tide and the sky has its star.
A man and a woman with love between
Loyal and tender and true and clean,
Nothing better has been or can be
Than just those three.

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Woman may alter the first great plan.
Daughters and sisters and mothers
May stalk with their brothers,
Forth from their homes into noisy places
Fit (and fit only) for masculine man.
Marring their graces
With conflict and strife
To widen the outlook of all human life.
Yet some things ever must stay as they are
While the sea has its tide and the sky has its star.
A man and a woman with love that strengthens
And gathers new force as its earth way lengthens;
Nothing better by God is given
This side of heaven.

Science may show us a wonderful, vast
Secret of life and of breeding it;
Man by the heeding it
Out of earth's chaos may bring a new order.
Off with old systems old laws may be cast.
What now seems the border
Of license in creeds
May then be the center of thoughts and of deeds.
Yet some things ever must stay as they are
While the sea has its tide and the sky has its star.
A man and a woman and love undefiled
And the look of the two in the face of a child—
Oh, the joys of this world have their changing ways,
But this joy stays.
Nothing better on earth can be
Than just those three.

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THE EDICT OF THE SEX

TWO thousand years had passed since Christ
was born,
When suddenly there rose a mighty host
Of women, sweeping to a central goal
As many rivers sweep on to the sea.
They came from mountains, valleys, and from coasts
And from all lands, all nations, and all ranks,
Speaking all languages, but thinking one.
And that one language—Peace.

"Listen," they said,
And straightway was there silence on the earth,
For men were dumb with wonder and surprise.
"Listen, O mighty masters of the world,
And hear the edict of all womankind;
Since Christ His new commandment gave to men
'Love one another,' full two thousand years
Have passed away, yet earth is red with blood.
The strong male rulers of the world proclaim
Their weakness, when we ask that war shall cease.

Now will the poor weak women of the world
Proclaim their strength, and say that war shall end.
Hear, then, our edict: Never from this day
Will any woman on the crust of earth
Mother a warrior. We have sworn the oath
And will go barren to the waiting tomb
Rather than breed strong sons at war's behest,
Or bring fair daughters into life, to bear
The pains of travail, for no end but war.
Ay! let the race die out for lack of babes:
Better a dying race than endless wars!
Better a silent world than noise of guns
And clash of armies.

"Long we asked for peace,
And oft you promised—but to fight again.
At last you told us, war must ever be
While men existed, laughing at our plea
For the disarmament of all mankind.
Then in our hearts flamed such a mad desire
For peace on earth, as lights the world at times
With some great conflagration; and it spread
From distant land to land, from sea to sea,
Until all women thought as with one mind
And spoke as with one voice; and now behold!
The great Crusading Syndicate of Peace,
Filling all space with one supreme resolve.
Give us, O men, your word that war shall end:
Disarm the world, and we will give you sons—
Sons to construct, and daughters to adorn
A beautiful new earth, where there shall be

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Fewer and finer people, opulence
And opportunity and peace for all.
Until you promise peace no shrill birth-cry
Shall sound again upon the ageing earth.
We wait your answer."
And the world was still.
While men considered.

THE HARP

The Harp is dual natured—Heaven and Earth
Are parents of its birth;
Heaven, the radiant mother; Earth, the sire
Whose unappeased desire
Reverberates and rings
Along its throbbing strings.

In sounds more eloquent than any word
The Heavenly Mother speaks—in tender chords
And tones that seem the echo from God's lands
Of singing choral bands.

The Spirit of Celestial music floats
Great argosies of soft melodious notes
Down the high octaves to their port and goal,
The human soul.

Then from some deep sea place, where dwells the
resonant bass,
All suddenly the mortal passions wake
And like wind-driven billows, rush and break
Upon the heart and flood it with an ocean
Of memory and emotion.
Ambitions, aspirations, hopes and dreams
Past, present, future, swirl in these great streams
Of harmony; and over and above
Sounds the clear call of love.

Into her confidence has Nature taken
The wondrous harp; so oft her strings are shaken
By voices of the wind—
By eerie laughter of the elfin kind—
By ripple of the brooks, by fall of leaves
And by the ebbing tide that sighs and grieves—
By whirr of wings at dawn—by that sweet word
Uttered in deep wood trysts twixt bird and bird
At mating time—yea all that Nature feels
And knows and understands, the Harp reveals.

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TWO VOICES

Virtue

O WANTON one, O wicked one, how was it that you came,
Down from the paths of purity, to walk the streets of shame?
And wherefore was that precious wealth God gave to you in trust,
Flung broadcast for the feet of men to trample in the dust?

Vice

O prudent one, O spotless one, now listen well to me.
The ways that led to where I tread these paths of sin, were three;
And God, and good folks, all combined to make them fair to see.

Virtue

O wicked one, blasphemous one, now how could that thing be?

Vice

The first was Nature's lovely road, whereon my life was hurled.
I felt the stirring in my blood, which permeates the world.
I thrilled like willows in the spring, when sap begins to flow;
It was young passion in my veins, but how was I to know?

The second was the silent road, where modest mothers dwell,
And hide from eager, curious minds, the truth they ought to tell.
This misnamed road called "Innocence" should bear the sign "To Hell."
With song and dance in ignorance I walked that road and fell.

Virtue

O fallen one, unhappy one, but why not rise and go
Back to the ways you left behind, and leave your sins below;
Nor linger in this sink of sin, since now you see, and know?

Vice

The third road was the fair highway, trod by the good and great.
I cried aloud to that vast crowd, and told my hapless fate.

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They hurried all through door and wall and shut Convention's gate.
I beat it with my bleeding hands; they must have heard me knock,
They must have heard wild sob and word, yet no one turned the lock.

Oh, it is very desolate, on Virtue's path to stand,
And see the good folks flocking by, withholding look and hand.

And so with hungry heart and soul, and weary brain and feet,
I left that highway whence you came, and sought the sinful street.
O prudent one, O spotless one, when good folks speak of me.
Go, tell them of the roads I came; the roadways fair, and three.

SYMPATHY

Is the way hard and thorny, oh, my brother?
Do tempests beat, and adverse wild winds blow?
And are you spent, and broken at each nightfall,
Yet with each morn you rise and onward go?
Brother, I know, I know!
I, too, have journeyed so.

Is your heart mad with longing, oh, my sister?
Are all great passions in your breast aglow?
Does the white wonder of your own soul blind you,
And are you torn with rapture and with woe?
Sister, I know, I know!
I, too, have suffered so.

Is the road filled with snare and quicksand, pilgrim?
Do pitfalls lie where roses seem to grow?
And have you sometimes stumbled in the darkness,
And are you bruised and scarred by many a blow?
Pilgrim, I know, I know,
I, too, have stumbled so.

Do you send out rebellious cry and question,
As mocking hours pass silently and slow?
Does your insistent "wherefore" bring no answer,
While stars wax pale with watching, and droop low?
I, too, have questioned so,
But now *I know, I know!*
To toil, to strive, to err, to cry, to grow,
To love through all—this is the way to *know*.

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The Revealing Angels

SUDDENLY and without warning they came
The Revealing Angels came.
Suddenly and simultaneously, through city streets
Through quiet lanes and country roads they walked
They walked crying: "God has sent us to find
The vilest sinners of earth.
We are to bring them before him, before the Lord of Life."

Their voices were like bugles;
And then all war, all strife,
And all the noises of the world grew still;
And no one talked;
And no one toiled, but many strove to flee away.
Robbers and thieves, and those sunk in drunkenness and crime,
Men and women of evil repute,
And mothers with fatherless children in their arms, all strove to hide.
But the Revealing Angels passed them by,
Saying: "Not you, not you.
Another day, when we shall come again
Unto the haunts of men,
Then we will call your names;
But God has asked us first to bring to him
Those guilty of greater shames
Than lust, or theft, or drunkenness, or vice
Yea, greater than murder done in passion,
Or self-destruction done in dark despair.
Now in his Holy Name we call:
Come one and all;
Come forth; reveal your faces."

Then through the awful silence of the world,
Where noise had ceased, they came
The sinful hosts.
They came from lowly and from lofty places,
Some poorly clad, but many clothed like queens;
They came from scenes of revel and from toil,
From haunts of sin, from palaces, from homes,
From boudoirs, and from churches.
They came like ghosts
The vast brigades of women who had slain
Their helpless, unborn children. With them trailed
Lovers and husbands who had said, "Do this,"
And those who helped for hire.
They stood before the Angels—before the Revealing Angels they stood.
And they heard the Angels say,
And all the listening world heard the Angels say:
"These are the vilest sinners of all;
For the Lord of Life made sex that birth might come:
Made sex and its keen, compelling desire
To fashion bodies wherein souls might go

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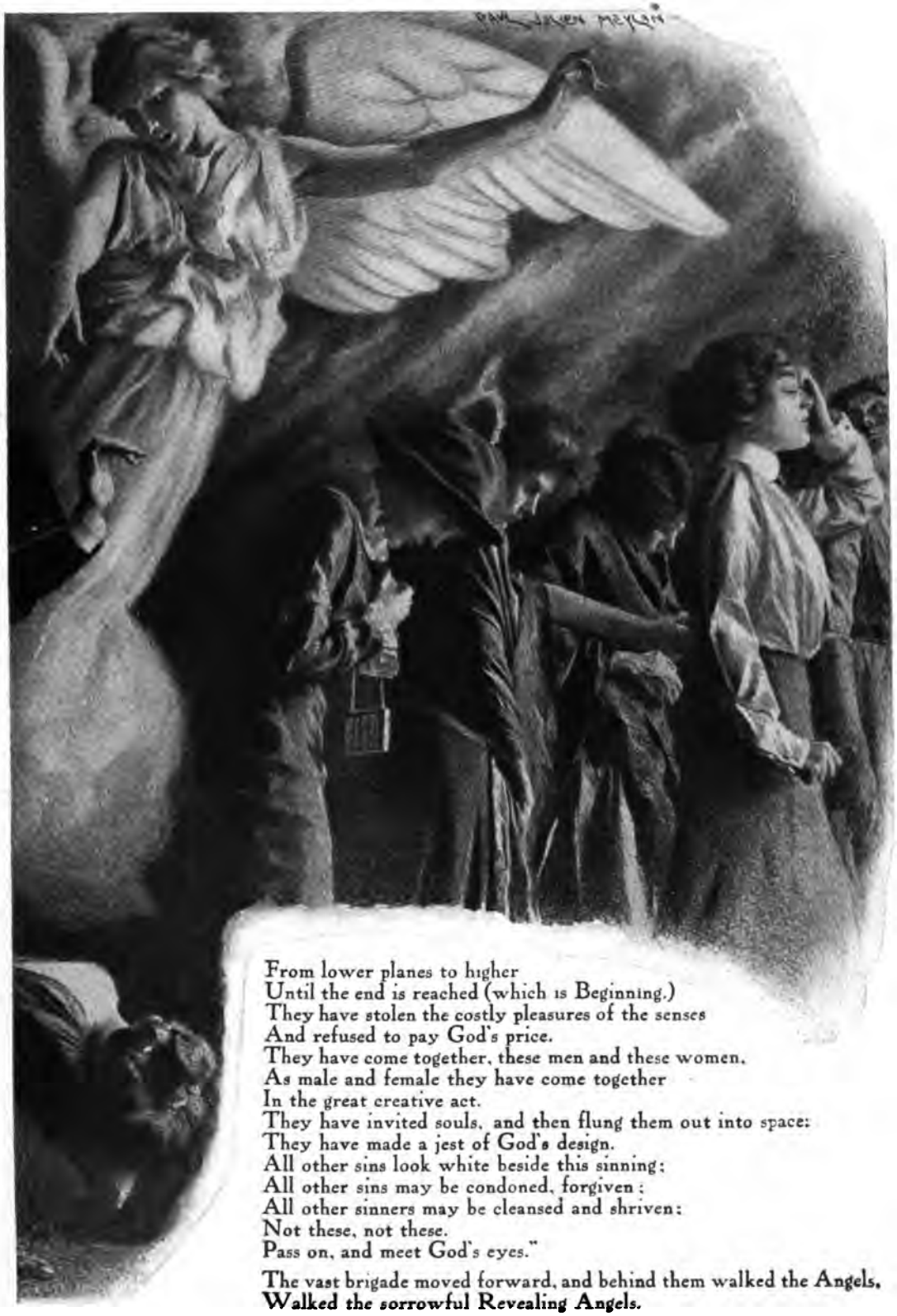

From lower planes to higher
Until the end is reached (which is Beginning.)
They have stolen the costly pleasures of the senses
And refused to pay God's price.
They have come together, these men and these women,
As male and female they have come together
In the great creative act.
They have invited souls, and then flung them out into space:
They have made a jest of God's design.
All other sins look white beside this sinning;
All other sins may be condoned, forgiven;
All other sinners may be cleansed and shriven:
Not these, not these.
Pass on, and meet God's eyes."

The vast brigade moved forward, and behind them walked the **Angels, Walked the sorrowful Revealing Angels.**

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ARROW AND BOW

IT is easy to stand in the pulpit or in the closet to kneel
And say—"God do this; God do that—
Make the world better; relieve the sorrows of man; for the sake of Thy Son
Oh, forgive all sin." Then having planned out God's work, to feel
Our duty is done.
It is easy to be religious this way.
Easy to pray.

It is harder to stand on the highway, or walk in the crowded mart;
And say "I am He; I am He;
Mine the world burden; mine the sorrows of men; mine is the Christ work
To forgive my brother's sin; and then to live the Christ part
And never to shirk."
It is hard for you and me
To be religious this way,
Day after day.

But God is no longer in Heaven; we drove Him out with our prayers;
Drove Him out with our sermons and creeds, and our endless plaints and despairs.
He came down over the borders, and Christ too came along;
They are looking the whole world over to see just what is wrong.
God has grown weary of hearing His praises sung on earth;
And Jesus is weary of hearing the story about His birth;
And the way to win Their favor, that is surer than any other,
Is to join in a song of Brotherhood and praises of one another.
No, God is no longer in Heaven; He has come down on earth to see
That nothing is wrong with the world He made; THE WRONG IS IN YOU AND ME.
He meant the earth for a garden spot, where mill and factory stand;
Childhood He meant for growing time; but look at the toiling band!
Woman was meant for mother and mate; now look at the slaves of lust.
And the good folks shake their heads and say "We must pray to God and trust."
God has a billion books of our prayers unopened upon his shelves,
For the things we are begging of Him to do, He wants us to do ourselves.

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Jehovah Jesus, and each soul in space
Are one, and undividable. Until
We see God shining in each neighbor's face
And find Him in ourselves and hail Him there,
Let us be still.
What use is prayer?
How can we love the whole, and not each part?
How worship God, and harbor in the heart
Hate of God's members? (for all men are that.)
Too long our souls have sat,
Like poor blind beggars at the door of God

He never made a beggar—We are kings!
Let us rise up, for it is time we trod
The mountain tops; time that we did the things
We have so long asked God to do.
He waits for you
To look deep in your brother's eyes and see
The God within;
To hear you say "Lo, thou art, thou art He."
This is the only way to end all sin.
The difficult, one way.

A prayer without a deed is an arrow without a bow-string;
A deed without a prayer is a bow-string without an arrow.
The heart of a man should be like a quiver full of arrows,
And the hand of a man should be like a strong bow strung for action.
The heart of a man should keep his arrows ever ascending,
And the hand and the mind of a man should keep at a work unending.

IT MATTERS ONLY

Carthage has gone, and Nineveh and Tyre!
Yea, thrice has Carthage in the dust been laid.
Of other, older, cities, Time has made
Dry kindling, for Ambition's funeral pyre.
This is the certain end of all desire.
Our work must perish and our dreams must fade;
Yet do I wake, each morning, undismayed,
To dream new dreams, to labor, and aspire.

It does not matter that my name must die,
My structures fall and nothing leave behind,
My best achievements pass away forever;
It matters only that immortal I
Feel God is in my heart and soul and mind,
Urging me on and on to new endeavor.

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Father and Son

MY grand-dame, vigorous at eighty-one,
Delights in talking of her only son,
My gallant father, long since dead and gone.
"Ah, but he was the lad!"
She says, and sighs, and looks at me askance.
How well I read the meaning of that glance—
"Poor son of such a dad;
Poor weakling, dull and sad."
I could, but would not, tell her bitter truth
About my father's youth.

She says: "Your father laughed his way through earth:
He laughed right in the doctor's face at birth—
Such joy of life he had, such founts of mirth.
Ah, what a lad was he!"
And then she sighs. I feel her silent blame,
Because I brought her nothing but his name.

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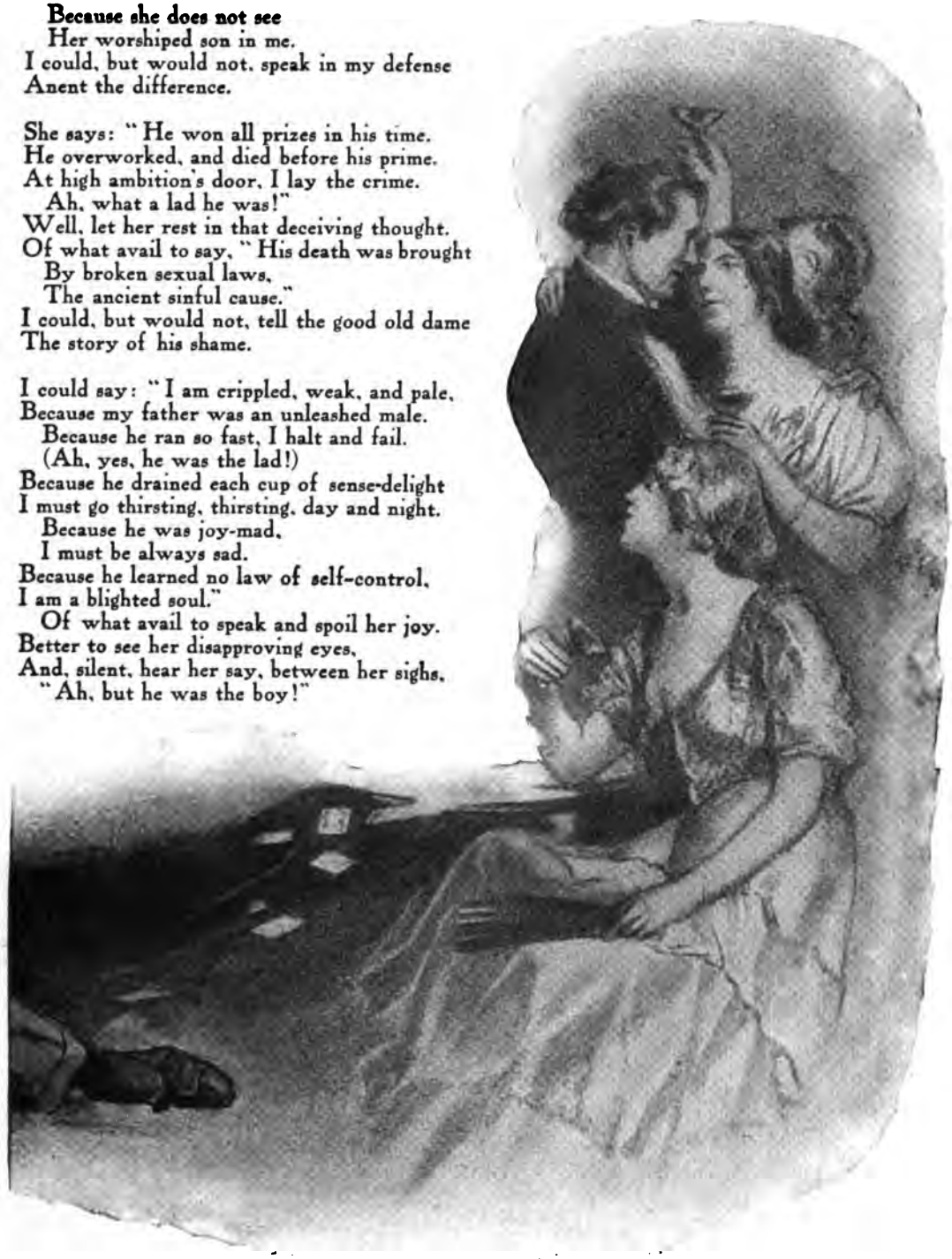
Because she does not see
Her worshiped son in me.
I could, but would not, speak in my defense
Anent the difference.

She says: "He won all prizes in his time.
He overworked, and died before his prime.
At high ambition's door, I lay the crime.
Ah, what a lad he was!"
Well, let her rest in that deceiving thought.
Of what avail to say, "His death was brought
By broken sexual laws,
The ancient sinful cause."
I could, but would not, tell the good old dame
The story of his shame.

I could say: "I am crippled, weak, and pale,
Because my father was an unleashed male.
Because he ran so fast, I halt and fail.
(Ah, yes, he was the lad!)
Because he drained each cup of sense-delight
I must go thirsting, thirsting, day and night.
Because he was joy-mad,
I must be always sad.
Because he learned no law of self-control,
I am a blighted soul."
Of what avail to speak and spoil her joy.
Better to see her disapproving eyes,
And, silent, hear her say, between her sighs,
"Ah, but he was the boy!"



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EUROPE

LITTLE lads and grandsires,
Women old with care;
But all men are dying men
Or dead men over there.

No one stops to dig graves;
Who has time to spare?
The dead men, the dead men
How the dead men stare!

Kings are out a-hunting—
Oh, the sport is rare;
With dying men and dead men
Falling everywhere.

Life for lads and grandsires;
Spoils for kings to share;
And dead men, dead men
Dead men everywhere.

THE SUITORS

There is a little Bungalow,
Perched on a granite ledge,
And at its feet two suitors meet;
(I watch them, and I know)
One waits outside the casement edge;
One paces to and fro.

The Patient Rock speaks not a word;
The Sea goes up and down,
And sings full oft, in cadence soft;
(I listen, and have heard)
Again he wears an angry frown
By jealous passion stirred.

This dawn, the Rock was all aglow;
Far out the mad Sea went,
Beyond the raft, like one gone daft;
(I saw them, and I know)
While radiant and well content
Smiled down the Bungalow.

That was at Dawn; ere day had set,
The Sea with pleading voice
Came back to woo his love anew;
(I saw them when they met)
And now I know not which her choice—
(The Rock's gray face was wet.)

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OCCUPATION

THERE must in Heaven be many industries
And occupations, varied, infinite,
Or Heaven could not be Heaven. What gracious tasks
The Mighty Maker of the Universe
Can offer souls, that have prepared on earth
By holding lovely thoughts and fair desires!

Art thou a poet to whom words come not!
A dumb composer of unuttered sounds,
Ignored by fame and to the world unknown?
Thine may be, then, the mission to create
Immortal lyrics and immortal strains,
For stars to chant together as they swing
About the holy centre where God dwells.

Hast thou the artist instinct with no skill
To give it form or color? Unto thee
It may be given to paint upon the skies
Astounding dawns and sunsets, framed by seas
And mountains; or to fashion and adorn
New faces for sweet pansies and new dyes
To tint their velvet garments. Oftentimes
Methinks behind a beauteous flower I see
Or in the tender glory of a dawn,
The presence of some spirit who has gone
Into the Place of Mystery, whose call
Imperious and compelling, sounds for all
Or soon or late. So many have passed on—
So many with ambitions, hopes and aims
Unrealized, who could not be content
As idle Angels, even in paradise.
The unknown Michael Angelos, who lived
With thoughts on beauty bent while chained to toil
That gave them only bread and burial—
These must find waiting in the World of Space
The shining timbers of their splendid dreams
Ready for shaping Temples, Shrines and Towers
Where radiant hosts may congregate to raise
Their glad hosannas to the God Supreme.
And will there not be gardens glorious
And Mansions all embosomed among blooms,
Where heavenly children reach out loving arms
To lonely women who have been denied
On earth, the longed for boon of Motherhood?

Surely God has provided work to do
For souls like these, and for the weary, rest

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OH, POOR SICK WORLD

LORD of all the Universe, when I think of YOU,
Flinging stars out into space, moving suns and tides;
Then this little mortal mind, gets the larger view;
And the carping self of me, runs away and hides.

Then I see all shadowed paths, leading out to Light;
See the false things fade away, leaving but the True;
See the wrong things slay themselves, leaving only Right;
When this little mortal mind, gets the larger view.

Cavillings at this and that, censure, doubt and fear,
Fly, as fly before the dawn, insects of the night;
Life and Death are understood; everything seems clear,
All the wrong things slay themselves, leaving only Right.

The World has walked with fever in its veins
For many and many a day. Oh, poor sick World!
Not knowing all its dreams of greed and gain
Of selfish conquest and possession, were
Disordered visions of a brain diseased.

Now the World's malady is at its height
And there is foul contagion in its breath.
It raves of death and slaughter; and the stars
Shake with reverberations of its cries,
And the sad seas are troubled and dismerged.

So must it rave—this sick and suffering world—
Until the old secretions in its blood
Are emptied out and purged away by war;
And the deep seated cankers of the mind
Begin the healing process. Then a calm
Shall come upon the earth; and that loved word
PEACE, shall be understood from shore to shore.

Shriek on, mad World. The Great Physician sits
Serenely conscious of the coming change,
Nor seeks to check the fever; it must run
Until its course is finished. He can wait.

He feels but pity for His ailing charge—
Not blame or anger. And He knows the hour
Will surely dawn when that sick child shall wake
Free from all frenzied fancies, and shall turn
Clear-seeing eyes upon the face of God.

In His vast Solar Systems He has seen
So many other Worlds delirious.

Lord of all the Universe when I think of YOU,
Then this little mortal mind gets the larger view.
Then I see all shadowed paths leading into Light,
Where the wrong things slay themselves, leaving only Right.

Oh, poor sick World!

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I WONDER

I READ the morning news
Here in this cosy spot,
And life seems a thing most sweet.
I wonder would I meet
The coming day with as glad a thought
Had I toiled all night till the break of dawn
That the world might know what is going on.

I read, and rest, and dream
Beside the glowing grate,
And life seems warm and good.
I wonder if it would
Had it happened that mine were the fate
To dig like a worm in the deep dark mold
That the world above me might keep off cold.

Out on the deck I sit
While the ship speeds on apace;
Oh, life is a joy at sea.
I wonder would it be
Had it happened that mine were the place
Down in the hot, close hold of the boat
To stoke the engine and keep it afloat.

On the flying train I speed
Off for a holiday;
And life is a lazy dream.
I wonder how it would seem
If I sat while the dark night paled to gray
Watching the signals with eyes astrain
And my whole thought bent on guiding the train.

Guardian angels who fill sky spaces,
Unseen Helpers and Spirit Friends,
Bless all the toilers in humble places
On whom the comfort of earth depends.
And waken the heart of the world till it heed
Their cry of need.

THE WINDS OF FATE

One ship drives east and another drives west
With the self-same winds that blow;
'Tis the set of the sails
And not the gales
That tells them the way to go.

Like the winds of the sea are the winds of fate
As we voyage along through life;
'Tis the set of the soul
That decides its goal
And not the calm or the strife.

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America

I AM the refuge of all the oppressed,
I am the boast of the free,
I am the harbor where ships may rest
Safely 'twixt sea and sea.
I hold up a torch to a darkened world,
I lighten the path with its ray.
Let my hand keep steady
And let me be ready
For whatever comes my way—
Let me be ready.

Oh, better than fortresses, better than guns,
Better than lance or spear,
Are the loyal hearts of my daughters and sons,
Faithful and without fear.
But my daughters and sons must understand
That Attila did not die.
And they must be ready,
Their hands must be steady,
If the hosts of hell come nigh—
They must be ready.

If Jesus were back on the earth with men,
He would not preach today
Until He had made him a scourge, and again
He would drive the defilers away.
He would throw down the tables of lust and greed
And scatter the changers' gold.
He would be ready,
His hand would be steady,
As it was in that temple of old—
He would be ready.

I am the cradle of God's new world,
From me shall the new race rise,
And my glorious banner must float unfurled,
Unsullied against the skies.
My sons and daughters must be my strength,
With courage to do and to dare.
With hearts that are ready,
With hands that are steady,
And their slogan must be, Prepare!—
They must be ready!

With a prayer on the lip they must shoulder arms,
For after all has been said,
We must muster guns,
If we master Huns—
And Attila is not dead—
We must be ready!

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SONGS OF LOVE AND THE SEA

I

WHEN first we met (the Sea and I),
Like one before a King
I stood in awe; nor felt nor saw
The sun, the winds, the earth, the sky
Or any other thing.
God's Universe to me,
Was just the Sea.

When next we met, the lordly Main
Played but a courtier's part;
Crowned Queen was I; and earth and sky,
And sun and sea were my domain,
Since love was in my heart.
Before, beyond, above,
Was only Love.

II

Love built me on a little rock,
A little house of pine;
At first, the Sea
Beat angrily
About that house of mine;
(That dear, dear home of mine).

But when it turned to go away
Beyond the sandy track,
Down o'er its wall
The house would call,
Until the Sea came back;
(It always hurried back).

And now the two have grown so fond,
(Oh, breathe no word of this),
When clouds hang low,
And east winds blow,
They meet and kiss and kiss;
(At night, I hear them kiss).

III

No man can understand the Sea until
He knows all passions of the senses, all
The great emotions of the heart, and each
Exalted aspiration of the soul.
Then may he sit beside the sea and say:
"I, too, have flung myself against the rocks,
And kissed their flinty brows with no return,
And fallen spent upon unfeeling sands.
I, too, have gone forth yearning, to far shores,
Seeking that something which would bring content,
And finding only what I took away;
And I have looked up through the veil of skies
When all the world was still, and understood
That I am one with Nature and with God."

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IV

The Dawn was flying from the Night;
Swift as the wind she sped;
Her hair was like a fleece of light;
Her cheeks were warm and red.

All passion pale, the Night pursued;
She fled away, away;
And in her garments, rainbow hued,
She gained the peak of day.

And then, all shaken with alarms,
She leaped down from its crest
Into the Sea's uplifted arms,
And swooned upon his breast.

THE HEIGHTS

I cried, "Dear Angel, lead me to the heights,
And spur me to the top."
The Angel answered, "Stop
And set thy house in order; make it fair
For absent ones who may be speeding there;
Then will we talk of heights."

I put my house in order "Now lead on!"
The Angel said, "Not yet;
Thy garden is beset
By thorns and tares; go weed it, so all those
Who come to gaze may find the unvexed rose;
Then will we journey on."

I weeded well my garden. "All is done."
The Angel shook his head.
"A beggar stands," he said
"Outside thy gates; till thou hast given heed
And soothed his sorrow, and supplied his need,
Say not that all is done."

The beggar left me singing. "Now at last—
At last the path is clear."
"Nay, there is one draws near
Who seeks, like thee, the difficult highway.
He lacks thy courage; cheer him through the day;
Then will we cry, 'At last.'"

I helped my weaker brother. "Now the heights;
Oh, guide me, Angel, guide!"
The Presence at my side,
With radiant face, said, "Look where are we now?"
And lo! we stood upon the mountain's brow—
The heights, the shining heights!

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WHAT THEY SAW

SAD man, sad man, tell me, pray,
What did you see to-day?

I saw the unloved and unhappy old waiting for slow, delinquent death to come;
Pale little children toiling for the rich, in rooms where sunlight is ashamed to go;
The awful almshouse, where the living dead rot slowly in their hideous, open graves.
And there were shameful things:
Soldiers and forts, and industries of death, and devil-ships, and loud-winged devil-birds,
All bent on slaughter and destruction. These and yet more shameful things mine eyes beheld:
Old men upon lascivious conquest bent, and young men living with no thought of God.
And half-clothed women puffing at a weed, aping the vices of the underworld,
Engrossed in shallow pleasures, and intent on being barren wives.
These things I saw.
(How God must loathe his earth!)

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Glad man, glad man, tell me, pray,
What did you see to-day?

I saw an aged couple in whose eyes
Shone that deep light of mingled love and faith
Which makes the earth one room of paradise
And leaves no sting in death.

I saw vast regiments of children pour,
Rank after rank, out of the schoolroom door,
By Progress mobilized. They seemed to say:
"Let ignorance make way.
We are the heralds of a better day."

I saw the college and the church that stood
For all things sane and good.
I saw God's helpers in the shop and slum
Blazing a path for health and hope to come,
And True Religion, from the grave of creeds,
Springing to meet man's needs.

I saw great Science reverently stand
And listen for a sound from Border-land,
No longer arrogant with unbelief,
Holding itself aloof,
But drawing near and searching high and low
For that complete and all convincing proof
Which shall permit its voice to comfort grief,
Saying, "We know."

I saw fair women in their radiance rise
And trample old traditions in the dust.
Looking in their clear eyes,
I seemed to hear these words as from the skies,
"He who would father our sweet children must
Be worthy of the trust."

Against the rosy dawn, I saw unfurled
The banner of the race we usher in—
The supermen and -women of the world,
Who make no code of sex to cover sin,
Before they till the soil of parenthood,
They look to it that seed and soil are good.

And I saw, too, that old, old sight, and best—
Pure mothers with dear babies at the breast.
These things I saw.
(How God must love his earth!)

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WE MUST SEND THEM OUT TO PLAY

NOW much there is need of doing must not be done in haste;
But slowly and with patience, as a jungle is changed to a town.
But listen, my brothers, listen; it is not always so:
When a murderer's hand is lifted to kill, there is no time to waste;
And the way to change his purpose is first to knock him down
And teach him the law of kindness after you give him the blow.

The acorn you plant in the morning will not give shade at noon;
And the thornless cactus must be bred by year on year of toil.
But listen, my brothers, listen; it is not ever the way,
For the roots of the poison ivy plant you cannot pull too soon;
If you would better your garden and make the most of your soil,
Hurry and dig up the evil things and cast them out today.

The ancient sin of the nations no law can ever efface;
We must wait for the mothers of men to grow, and give clean souls to their sons.
But listen, my brothers, listen; when a child cries out in pain,
We must rise from the banquet board and go, though the host is saying grace;
We must rise and find the Herod of Greed, who is killing our little ones,
Nor ever go back to the banquet until the monster is slain.

The strong man waits for justice, with lifted soul and eyes,
As a sturdy oak will face the storm and does not break or bow.
But listen, my brothers, listen; the child is a child for a day;
If a merciless foot treads down each shoot, how can the forest rise?
We are robbing the race when we rob a child; we must rescue the children NOW;
We must rescue the little slaves of Greed and send them out to play.

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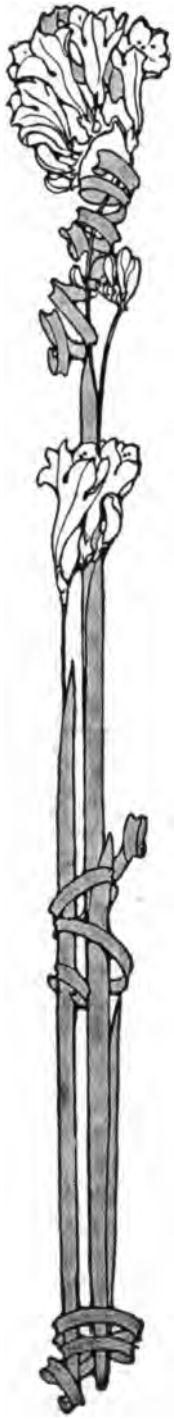
RECRIMINATION



I

SAID Life to Death, "Methinks if I were you,
I would not carry such an awesome face
To terrify the helpless human race.
And, if, indeed, those wondrous tales be true
Of happiness beyond, and if I knew
About the boasted blessings of that place,
I would not hide so miserly all trace
Of my vast knowledge, Death, if I were you;
But like a glorious angel I would lean
Above the pathway of each sorrowing soul,
Hope in my eyes, and comfort in my breath,
And strong conviction in my radiant mien,
The while I whispered of that beauteous goal;
This would do, if I were you, O Death!"

II

Said Death to Life, "If I were you, my friend,
I would not lure confiding souls each day
With fair false smiles, to enter on a way
So filled with pain and trouble to the end.
I would not tempt those whom I should defend,
Nor stand unmoved and see them go astray.
Nor would I force unwilling souls to stay
Who longed for freedom, were I you, my friend.
But like a tender mother I would take
The weary world upon my sheltering breast
And wipe away its tears, and soothe its strife.
I would fulfill my promises, and make
My children bless me as they sank to rest
Where now they curse—if I were you, O Life!"

III

Life made no answer; and Death spoke again:
"I would not woo from God's sweet nothingness
A soul to being, if I could not bless
And crown it with all joy. If unto men
My face seems awesome, tell me, Life, why then
Do they pursue me, mad for my caress,
Believing in my silence lies redress
For your loud falsehoods? (So Death spoke again.)
Oh, it is well for you I am not fair,
Well that I hide behind a voiceless tomb
The mighty secrets of that other place;
Else would you stand in impotent despair
While unfledged souls straight from the mother's
womb
Rushed to my arms, and spat upon your face."

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CHRIST CRUCIFIED

NOW ere I slept, my prayer had been that I
might see my way
To do the will of Christ, our Lord and Master,
day by day;
And with this prayer upon my lips, I knew not that I
dreamed,
But suddenly the world of night a pandemonium
seemed.
From forest, and from slaughter house, from bull
ring, and from stall,
There rose an anguished cry of pain, a loud, appealing
call;
As man—the dumb beast's next of kin—with gun, and
whip, and knife,
Went pleasure-seeking through the earth, blood-bent
on taking life.
From trap, and cage, and house, and zoo, and street,
that awful strain
Of tortured creatures rose and swelled the orchestra
of pain.
And then methought the gentle Christ appeared to
me, and spoke:
"I called ye, but ye answered not"—and in my fear I
woke.

The next I heard the roar of mills; and moving through
the noise,
Like phantoms in an underworld, were little girls and
boys.
Their backs were bent, their brows were pale, their
eyes were sad and old,
But, by the labor of their hands greed added gold to
gold.
Again the Presence and the Voice: "Behold the crimes
I see,
As ye have done it unto these, so have ye done to me."

Again I slept. I seemed to climb a hard ascending
track;
And just behind me labored one whose patient face
was black.
I pitied him; but hour by hour he gained upon the
path;
He stood beside me, stood upright—and then I turned
in wrath.
"Go back!" I cried. "What right have you to walk
beside me here?
For you are black, and I am white." I paused, struck
dumb with fear.

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For lo! the black man was not there, but Christ stood
in his place;
And oh! the pain, the pain, the pain that looked from
that dear face.

Now when I woke, the air was rife with that sweet,
rhythmic din
Which tells the world that Christ has come to save
mankind from sin.
And through the open door of church and temple passed
a throng
To worship Him with bended knee, with sermon and
with song.
But over all I heard the cry of hunted, mangled things;
Those creatures which are part of God, though they
have hoofs and wings.
I saw in mill, and mine, and shop, the little slaves of
greed;
I heard the strife of race with race, all sprung from one
God-seed.
And then I bowed my head in shame, and in contrition
cried—
"Lo, after nineteen hundred years Christ still is Crucified."

"PROTEST"

To sit in silence when we should protest
Makes cowards of men. The human race
Has climbed on protest. Had no voice been raised
Against injustice, ignorance, and lust,
The Inquisition yet would serve the law
And guillotines decide our least disputes.
The few who dare must speak and speak again,
To right the wrongs of many. *Speak!* Thank God,
No vested power in this great day and land
Can gag and throttle; press and voice may cry
Loud disapproval of existing ills,
May criticise oppression, and condemn
The lawlessness of wealth-protecting laws
That let the children and child bearers toil
To purchase ease for idle millionaires.
Therefore do I protest against the boast
Of independence in this mighty land.
Call no chain strong which holds one rusted link;
Call no land free that holds one fettered slave;
Until the manacled, slim wrists of babes
Are loosed to toss in childish sport and glee;
Until the Mother bears no burden save
The precious one beneath her heart; until
God's soil is rescued from the clutch of greed
And given back to Labor; let no man
Call this the land of Freedom.

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A Revery in the Station-House

LAST night I walked along the city street
And smiled at men; they saw the ancient sin
In my young eyes, and one said, "Come with me."
I went with him, believing my poor purse
Would fatten with his gold. He brought me here
And turned the key upon me. In an hour,
I shall be called before the judge and fined,
Because I have solicited. How strange
And inexplicable a thing is law—
How curious its whys, and why-nots! I
Was young and innocent of evil thought
A few brief years ago. My brother's friend,
A social favorite to whom all doors
Were open (and a church communicant),
Sought me, soliciting my faith and trust,
And brushed the dew of virtue from my lips;
Then left me to my solitary thoughts.
Death and misfortune entered on the scene;
I was thrown out to battle with the world,
And hide the anguish of a maid deflowered.

I left my first employer,—left because
He, too, solicited those favors that
No contract mentions, but which seem to be
Expected duties by unwritten law
In many business-houses. Soon I learned
That virtue is, indeed, its own reward,
And often finds no other. My poor wage
For honest labor and a decent life
Scarce kept me fed and sheltered. Everywhere
In office, boarding-house, and in church aisles
I met the eyes of men soliciting.
They supplemented pleading looks by words,
And laughed at all my scruples. Finally,
The one compelling lover had his way,
And when he wearied of me I began
The dreary treadmill of the city streets,
Soliciting whoever crossed my path
To take my favors and to give me gold.

Somehow, I cannot seem to understand
Why there is law to punish me for that,
And none to punish any of the men
Who have pursued me with soliciting
Right from the threshold of my childhood's home
To this grim station-house.
My case is called?
Well, lead the way, and I will follow you.

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PAIN'S PURPOSE

HOW blind is he who prays that God will send
All pain from earth. Pain has its use and place;
Its ministry of holiness and grace.
The darker tones upon the canvas blend
With light and color; and their shadows lend
The painting half its dignity. Efface
The sombre background, and you lose all trace
Of that perfection which is true art's trend.

Life is an artist seeking to reveal
God's majesty and beauty in each soul.
If from the palette mortal man could steal
The precious pigment pair, why then the scroll
Would glare with colors meaningless and bright,
Or show an empty canvas, blurred with light.

LAWNS

The roads that from my childhood's home led out,
As seasons changed were paved with dust or snow;
And in the summer, bordered all about
With unkempt grasses, and wild weeds ablow.

I can recall the early ride to town,
One soft spring morning in the month of May.
(The promised purchase of my Sunday gown
Lent mystery and glory to the day.)

And I recall the feeling even yet,
Which stole upon me as we neared the place
Where country roads with city pavements met,
For there life seemed to show a fairer face.

The gala windows of the tempting store—
The throngs of people moving on and on—
I loved the sight of these; but loved still more
The vernal splendor of each close cut lawn.

Down to the very street from each abode
They stretched their lovely lengths, block after block;
A comely contrast to the dusty road
And weedy wilds where I was wont to walk.

They lay like velvet carpets soft and bright,
Spread for the feet of Beauty and Repose.
My unformed mind was moved by pure delight,
And something sweet and tender in me rose.

A vision nebulous and indistinct
Lifted my fancy to a world ideal
Where earth and fairyland were interlinked
And all the "might be's" of this life were real.

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And where the country places all were towns,
With gala windows filled with What-we-Seek;
Where little children wore their Sunday gowns
And danced on emerald lawns throughout the week.

So in her wonderhouse of beauteous wares
Which Life has shown to me, a green lawn seems
Like tapestries thrown over flights of stairs
On which I mounted to my world of dreams.

I AM RUNNING FORTH TO MEET YOU

I am running forth to meet you, O my Master,
For they tell me you are surely on the way;
Yes, they tell me you are coming back again
(While I run, while I run).
And I wish my feet were winged to speed on faster,
And I wish I might behold you here today,
Lord of men.

I am running, yet I walk beside my neighbor,
And I take the duties given me to do;
Yes, I take the daily duties as they fall
(While I run, while I run),
And my heart runs with my hand and helps the labor.
For I think this is the way that leads to you,
Lord of all.

I am running, yet I turn from toil and duty,
Oftentimes to just the art of being glad;
Yes, to just the joys that make the earth-world bright
(While I run, while I run).
For the soul that worships God must worship beauty,
And the heart that thinks of You can not be sad,
Lord of Light.

I am running, yet I pause to greet my brother,
And I lean to rid my garden of its weed;
Yes, I lean, although I lift my thoughts above
(While I run, while I run).
And I think of that command, "Love one another,"
As I hear discordant sounds of creed with creed,
Lord of Love.

I am running, and the road is lit with splendor,
And it brightens and shines fairer with each span;
Yes, it brightens like the highway in a dream
(While I run, while I run).
And my heart to all the world grows very tender,
For I seem to see the Christ in every man,
Lord supreme.

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HIS LAST LETTER

WELL, you are free;
The longed-for, lied-for, waited-for decree
Is yours to-day.
I made no protest—and you had your say,
And left me with no vestige of repute.
"Neglect, abuse, and cruelty" you charge,
With broken marriage-vows. The list was large,
But not to be denied. So I was mute.

Now you shall listen to a few plain facts
Before you go out wholly from my life
As some man's wife.
Read carefully this statement of your acts
Which changed the luster of my honeymoon
To somber gloom,
And wrenched the cover from Pandora's box.

In those first talks
'Twixt bride and groom, I showed you my whole heart;
Showed you how deep my love was and how true;
With all a strong man's feeling I loved *you*.
(God, how I loved you, my own chosen mate!)
But I learned this
(So poorly did you play your little part):
You married marriage—to avoid the fate
Of having "Miss"
Carved on your tombstone. Love you did not know;
But you were greedy for the showy things
That money brings.
Such weak affection as you could bestow
Was given the provider, not the lover.

The knowledge hurt. Keen pain like that is dumb

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And masks itself in smiles, lest men discover.
But I was lonely, and the feeling grew
The more I studied you.
Into your shallow heart love could not come;
But yet you loved my love, because it gave
The prowess of a mistress o'er a slave.
You showed your power
In petty tyranny, hour after hour,
Day after day, year after lengthening year;
My tasks, my pleasures, my pursuits were not
Held near or dear,
Or made to seem important in your thought.
My friends were not your friends; you goaded me
By foolish and ignoble jealousy,
Till, through suggestion's laws,
I gave you cause.
The beauteous ideal love had hung
In my soul's shrine,
And worshiped as a something all divine,
With wanton hand you flung
Into the dust. And then you wondered why
My love should die.

My sins and derelictions cry aloud
To all the world. My head is bowed
Under its merited reproaches. Yours
Is lifted to receive
The sympathy the court's decree insures.
The world loves to believe
In Man's depravity and Woman's worth;
But I am one of many men on earth
Whose loud, resounding fall
Is like the crashing of some well-built wall,
Which those who seek can trace
To the slow work of insects at its base.

Be not afraid;
The alimony will be promptly paid.

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HUSKS

SHE looked at her neighbor's house in the light
of the waning day—
A shower of rice on the steps and the shreds of a
bride's bouquet.
And then she drew the shade, to shut out the growing
gloom,
But she shut it into her heart instead. (Was that a
voice in the room?)

"My neighbor is sad," she sighed, "like the mother
bird who sees
The last of her brood fly out of the nest to make its
home in the trees"—
And then in a passion of tears—"But, oh, to be sad
like her;
Sad for a joy that has come and gone!" (Did some one
speak, or stir?)
She looked at her faded hands, all burdened with
costly rings;
She looked on her widowed home, all burdened with
priceless things.
She thought of the dead years gone, of the empty years
ahead—
(Yes, something stirred and something spake, and this
was what it said:)

"The voice of the Might Have Been speaks here through the lonely dusk;
Life offered the fruits of love; you gathered only the husk.
There are jewels ablaze on your breast where never a child has slept."

She covered her face with her ringed old hands, and
wept, and wept, and wept.

NEUTRAL

That pale word "Neutral" sits becomingly
On lips of weaklings. But the men whose brains
Find fuel in their blood, the men whose minds
Hold sympathetic converse with their hearts,
Such men are never neutral. That word stands
Unsexed and impotent in Realms of Speech
When mighty problems face a startled world
No virile man is neutral. Right or wrong
His thoughts go forth, assertive, unafraid
To stand by his convictions, and to do
Their part in shaping issues to an end.
Silence may guard the door of useless words,
At dictate of Discretion; but to stand
Without opinions in a world which needs
Constructive thinking, is a coward's part.

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PEACE SHOULD NOT COME

PEACE should not come alone this foul earth way,
Peace should not come, until we cleanse the earth.
God waited for us; now in awful wrath
He pours the blood of men out day by day
To purify the highroad for her feet.
Why, what would Peace do, in a world where hearts,
Are filled with thoughts like poison-pointed darts?
It were not meet, surely it were not meet
For Peace to come, and with her white robes hide
These industries of death—these guns and swords,—
These uniformed, hate-filled, destructive hordes,—
These hideous things, that are each nation's pride.
So long as men believe in armed might
Let arms be brandished. Let not Peace be sought
Until the race-heart empties out all thought
Of blows and blood, as arguments for Right.
The world has never had enough of war.
Else war were not. Now let the monster stand
Until he slays himself with his own hand;
Though no man knows what he is fighting for,
Then in the place where wicked cannons stood
Let Peace erect her shrine of Brotherhood.

THE TRAVELER

Bristling with steeples, high against the hill,
Like some great thistle in the rosy dawn
It stood; the Town-of-Christian-Churches, stood.
The Traveler surveyed it with a smile.
"Surely," He said, "here is the home of peace;
Here neighbor lives with neighbor in accord,
God in the heart of all; else why these spires?"
(Christmas season, and every bell ringing.)

The sudden shriek of whistles changed the sound
From mellow music into jarring noise.
Then down the street pale hurrying children came.
And vanished in the yawning factory door.
He called to them: "Come back, come unto Me."
The foreman cursed, and caned Him from the place.
(Christmas season, and every bell ringing.)

Forth from two churches came two men, and met,
Disputing loudly over boundary lines,
Hate in their eyes, and murder in their hearts.
A haughty woman drew her skirts aside
Because her fallen sister passed that way.
The Traveler rebuked them all. Amazed,
They asked in indignation, "Who are you,
Daring to interfere in private lives?"
The Traveler replied, "My name is CHRIST."
(Christmas season, and every bell ringing.)

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DIVORCED

THINKING of one thing all day long, at night
I fall asleep, brain weary and heart sore;
But only for a little while. At three,
Sometimes at two o'clock, I wake and lie,
Staring out into darkness; while my thoughts
Begin the weary tread-mill toil again,
From that white marriage morning of our youth
Down to this dreadful hour.

I see your face
Lit with the lovelight of the honeymoon;
I hear your voice, that lingered on my name
As if it loved each letter; and I feel
The clinging of your arms about my form,
Your kisses on my cheek—and long to break
The anguish of such memories with tears,
But cannot weep; the fountain has run dry.
We were so young, so happy, and so full
Of keen, sweet joy of life. I had no wish
Outside your pleasure; and you loved me so
That when I sometimes felt a woman's need
For more serene expression of man's love
(The need to rest in calm affection's bay
And not sail ever on the stormy main),
Yet would I rouse myself to your desire;
Meet ardent kisses with kisses just as warm;
So nothing I could give should be denied.

And then our children came. Deep in my soul,
From the first hour of conscious motherhood,
I knew I should conserve myself for this
Most holy office; knew God meant it so.
Yet even then, I held your wishes first;
And by my double duties lost the bloom
And freshness of my beauty; and beheld
A look of disapproval in your eyes.
But with the coming of our precious child,
The lover's smile, tinged with the father's pride,
Returned again; and helped to make me strong;
And life was very sweet for both of us.

Another, and another birth, and twice
The little white hearse paused beside our door
And took away some portion of my youth
With my sweet babies. At the first you seemed

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To suffer with me, standing very near;
But when I wept too long, you turned away.
And I was hurt, not realizing then
My grief was selfish I could see the change
Which motherhood and sorrow made in me:
And when I saw the change that came to you,
Saw how your eyes looked past me when you talked,
And when I missed the love tone from your voice,
I did that foolish thing weak women do,
Complained, and cried, accused you of neglect,
And made myself obnoxious in your sight.

And often, after you had left my side,
Alone I stood before my mirror, mad
With anger at my pallid cheeks, my dull
Unlighted eyes, my shrunken mother-breasts,
And wept, and wept, and faded more and more.
How could I hope to win back wandering love,
And make new flames in dying embers leap
By such ungracious means?

And then She came,
Firm-bosomed, round of cheek, with such young eyes,
And all the ways of youth. I who had died
A thousand deaths in waiting the return
Of that old love-look to your face once more,
Died yet again and went straight into hell
When I beheld it come at her approach.

My God! My God! How have I borne it all!
Yet since she had the power to wake that look—
The power to sweep the ashes from your heart
Of burned-out love of me, and light new fires,
One thing remained for me—to let you go.
I had no wish to keep the empty frame
From which the priceless picture had been wrenched.
Nor do I blame you; it was not your fault:
You gave me all that most men can give—love
Of youth, of beauty, and of passion; and
I gave you full return; my womanhood
Matched well your manhood. Yet had you grown ill,
Or old, and unattractive from some cause
(Less close than was my service unto you),
I should have clung the tighter to you, dear;
And loved you, loved you, loved you more and more.

I grow so weary thinking of these things;
Day in, day out, and half the awful nights.

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HAPPINESS

THERE are so many little things which make life beautiful.
I can recall a day in early youth when I was longing for happiness.
Toward the western hills I gazed, watching for its approach.
The hills lay between me and the setting sun, and over them led a highway.
When some traveler crossed the hill, always a fine gray dust rose cloudlike against the sky.
The traveler I could not distinguish, but the dust-cloud I could see.

And the dust-cloud seemed formed of hopes and possibilities—each speck an embryo event.
At sunset, when the skies were fair, the dust-cloud grew radiant and shone with visions.
The happiness for which I waited came not to me adown that western slope.
But now I can recall the cloud of golden dust, the sunset, and the highway leading over the hill,
The wonderful hope and expectancy of my heart, the visions of youth in my eyes; and I know this was happiness.

There are so many little things which make life beautiful.
I can recall another day when I rebelled at life's monotony.
Everywhere about me was the commonplace; and nothing seemed to happen.
Each day was like its yesterday, and to-morrow gave no promise of change.
My young heart rose rebellious in my breast, and I ran aimlessly into the sunlight—the glowing sunlight of June.

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I sent out a dumb cry to Fate, demanding larger joys and more delight.
I ran blindly into a field of blooming clover.

It was breast-high, and billowed about me like rose-red waves of a fragrant sea.
The bees were singing above it; and their little brown bodies were loaded with honey-dew, extracted from the clover blossoms.
The sun reeled in the heavens, dizzy with its own splendor.
The day went into night, without bringing any new event to change my life.
But now I recall the field of blooming clover and the honey-laden bees, the glorious June sunlight and the passion of youth in my heart; and I know that was happiness.

There are so many little things which make life beautiful.
Yesterday a failure stared me in the face, where I had thought to welcome proud success.
There was no radiant cloud of dust against the western sky, and no clover field lying fragrant under mid-June suns;
Neither was youth with me any more.

But under the vines that clung against my walls, a flock of birds sought shelter just at twilight;
And, standing at my casement, I could hear the twitter of their voices and the soft, sweet flutter of their wings.
Then over me there fell a sense of peace and calm, and love for all created things, and trust illimitable.

And that, I knew, was happiness.

There are so many little things which make life beautiful.

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THE GULF STREAM

SKILLED mariner, and counted sane and wise,
That was a curious thing which chanced to me,
So good a sailor on so fair a sea.
With favoring winds and blue unshadowed skies,
Led by the faithful beacon of Love's eyes
Past reef and shoal, my life-boat bounded free
And fearless of all dangers that might be
Under calm waves, where many a sunk rock lies.

A golden dawn; yet suddenly my barque
Strained at the sails, as in a cyclone's blast,
And battled with an unseen current's force.
For we had entered when the night was dark
That old tempestuous Gulf Stream of the Past.
But for Love's eyes, I had not kept the course.

THAT DAY

O heart of mine, through all these perfect days,
Whether of white Decembers or green Mays,
There runs a dark thought like a creeping snake,
Or like a black thread which by some mistake
Life has strung through the pearls of happy years,
A thought which borders all my joy with tears.

Some day, some day, or you, or I, alone,
Must look upon the scenes we two have known,
Must tread the self-same path we two have trod,
And cry in vain to one who is with God
To lean down from the Silent Realms and say:
"I love you" in the old familiar way.

Some day—and each day, beauteous though it be,
Brings closer that dread hour for you or me.
Fleet-footed joy, who hurries time along,
Is yet a secret foe who does us wrong;
Speeding us gaily, though he well doth know
Of yonder pathway where but one may go.

Ay, one will go. To go is sweet, I wis—
Yet God must needs invent some special bliss
To make His Paradise seem very dear
To one who goes and leaves the other here.
To sever souls so bound by love and time,
For any one but God, would be a crime.

Yet death will entertain his own, I think.
To one who stays life gives the gall to drink;
To one who stays, or be it you or me,
There waits the Garden of Gethsemane.
O dark, inevitable, and awful day,
When one of us must go and one must stay!

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THE CALL

IN the banquet hall of Progress
God has bidden to a feast
All the women in the East.

Some have said, "We are not ready—
We must wait another day."
Some, with voices clear and steady
"Lord, we hear, and we obey."

Others, timid and uncertain,
Step forth trembling in the light.
Many hide behind the curtain
With their faces hid from sight.

In the banquet hall of Progress
All must gather soon or late,
And the patient Host will wait.

If today or if tomorrow,
If in gladness, or in woe,
If with pleasure, or with sorrow,
All must answer, all must go.

They must go with unveiled faces,
Clothed in virtue and in pride.
For the Host has set their places,
And He will not be denied.

JUST YOU

All the selfish joys of earth
I am getting through.
That which used to lure and lead
Now I pass and give no heed;
Only one thing seems of worth—
Just you.

Not for me the lonely height,
And the larger view;
Lowlier ways seems fair and wide,
While we wander side by side.
One thing makes the whole world bright—
Just you.

Not for distant goals I run,
No great aim pursue;
Most of earth's ambitions seem
Like the shadow of a dream.
All the world to me means one—
Just you.

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UNSATISFIED

THE bird flies home to its young;
The flower folds its leaves about an opening bud.
And in my neighbor's house there is the cry of a child.
I close my window that I need not hear.

She is mine, and she is very beautiful;
And in her heart there is no evil thought.
There is even love in her heart—
Love of life, love of joy, love of this fair world,
And love of me (or love of my love for her);
Yet she will never consent to bear me a child,
And when I speak of it she weeps.
Always she weeps, saying:
"Do I not bring joy enough into your life?
Are you not satisfied with me and my love,
As I am satisfied with you?
Never would I urge you to some great peril
To please my whim; yet ever so you urge me;
Urge me to risk my happiness—yea, life itself—
So lightly do you hold me." And then she weeps,
Always she weeps until I kiss away her tears,
And soothe her with sweet lies, saying I am content.
Then she goes singing through the house like some bright bird
Preening her wings, making herself all beautiful,
Perching upon my knee, and pecking at my lips
With little kisses. So again love's ship
Goes sailing forth upon a portless sea,
From nowhere unto nowhere; and it takes
Or brings no cargoes to enrich the world.
The years
Are passing by us. We will yet be old
Who now are young. And all the man in me
Cries for the reproduction of myself
Through her I love. Why, love and youth like ours
Could populate with gods and goddesses
This great, green earth, and give the race new types
Were it made fruitful! Often I can see,
As in a vision, desolate old age
And loneliness descending on us two,
And nowhere in the world, nowhere beyond the earth,
Fruit of my loins and of her womb to feed
Our hungry hearts. To me it seems
More sorrowful than sitting by small graves
And wetting sad-eyed pansies with our tears.

The bird flies home to its young;
The flower folds its leaves about an opening bud.
And in my neighbor's house there is the cry of a child.
I close my window that I need not hear.

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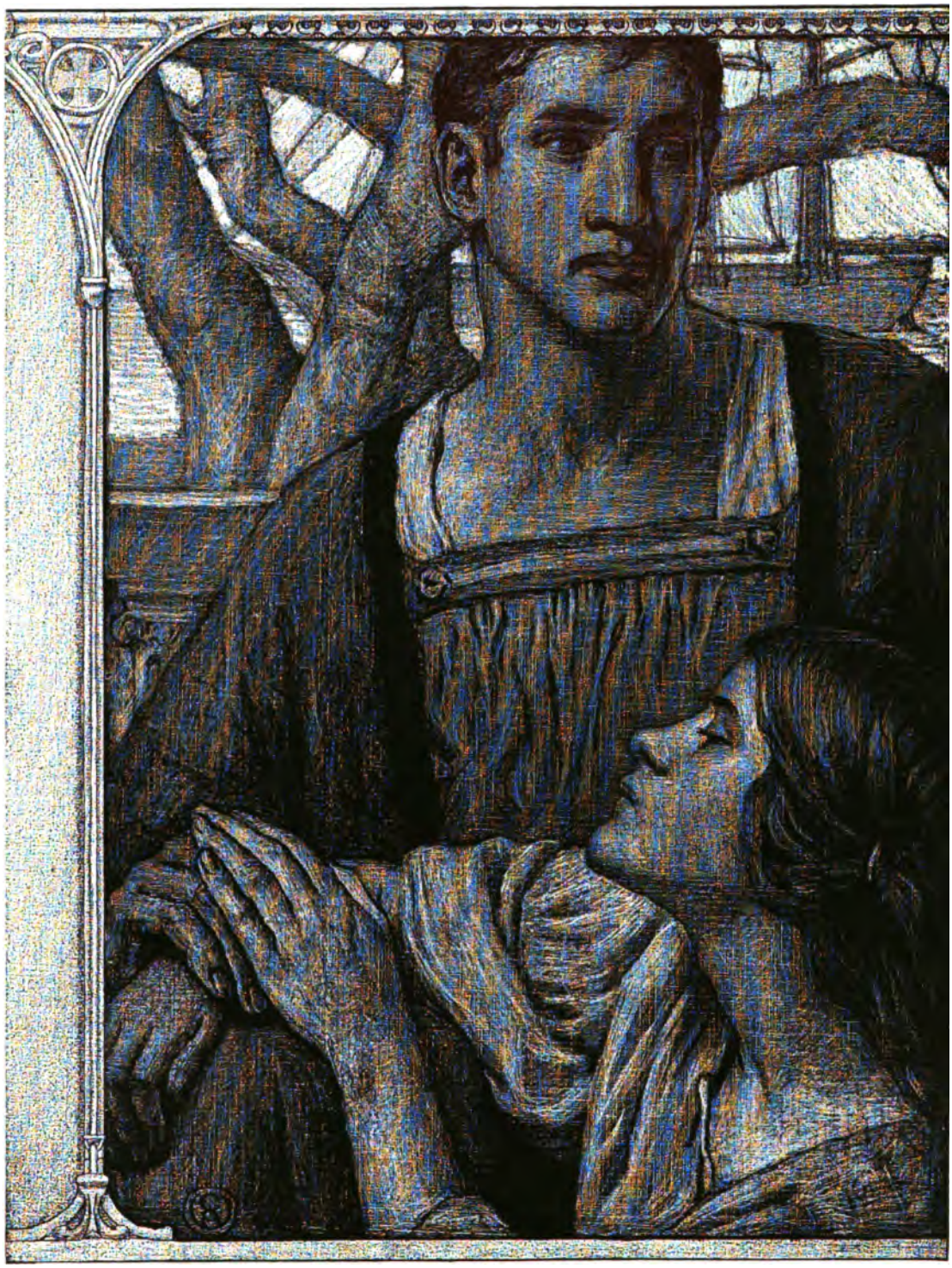

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ALL IN A COACH AND FOUR

THE quality folk went riding by
All in a coach and four,
And pretty Annette, in a calico gown,
(Bringing her marketing things from town),
Stopped short with her Sunday store,
And wondered if ever it should betide
That she in a long plumed hat would ride
Away in a coach and four.

A lord there was, oh a lonely soul,
There in the coach and four;
His years were young but his heart was old,
And he hated his coaches and hated his gold
(Those things which we all adore).
And he thought how sweet it would be to trudge
Along with the fair little country drudge,
And away from his coach and four.

So back he rode the very next day
All in his coach and four,
And he went each day whether dry or wet,
Until he married the sweet Annette
(In spite of her lack of lore).
But they didn't trudge off on foot together,
For he bought her a hat with a long, long feather,
And they rode in the coach and four.

Now a thing like this could happen we know,
All in a coach and four;
But the fact of it is, 'twixt me and you,
There isn't a word of the story true,
(Pardon I do implore).
It is only a foolish and fanciful song,
That came to me as I rode along,
All in a coach and four.

A MINOR CHORD

I heard a strain of music in the street—
A wandering waif of sound. And then straightway
A nameless desolation filled the day.
The great green earth that had been fair and sweet
Seemed but a tomb; the life I thought replete
With joy, grew lonely for a vanished May.
Forgotten sorrows resurrected lay
Like bleaching skeletons about my feet.
Above me stretched the silent, suffering sky
Dumb with vast anguish for departed suns
That brutal time to nothingness has hurled.
The daylight was as sad as smiles that lie
Upon the wistful unkissed mouths of nuns,
And I stood prisoned in an awful world.

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THE SQUANDERER

GOD gave him passions, splendid as the sun,
Meant for the lordliest purposes; a part
Of Nature's full and fertile mother heart,
From which new systems and new worlds are spun.
And now behold, behold, what he has done;
In Folly's Court and Carnal Pleasure's Mart
He flung the wealth life gave him at the start;
This of all mortal sins, the deadliest one.

At dawn he stood, potential, opulent
With virile manhood and emotions keen,
And wonderful with God's creative fire.
At noon he stands, all love's large fortune spent
In petty traffic, unproductive—mean—
A pauper, cursed with impotent desire.

THE LAND OF THE GONE-AWAY SOULS

Oh! that is a beautiful land I wis,
The land of the Gone-Away Souls.
Yes, a lovelier region by far than this
(Though this is a world most fair.)
The goodliest goal of all good goals,
Else why do our friends stay there?

I walk in a world that is sweet with friends,
And earth I have ever held dear;
Yes, love with duty and beauty blends
To render the earth place bright.
But faster and faster, year on year
My comrades hurry from sight.

They hurry away to the Over-There,
And few of them say farewell
Yes, they go away with a secret air
As if on a secret quest.
And they come not back to the earth to tell
Why that land seems the best.

Messages come from the mystic sphere,
But few know the code of that land,
Yes, many the message but few who hear,
In the din of the world below,
Or hearing the message, can understand
Those truths which we long to know.

But it must be the goal of all good goals,
And I think of it more and more.
Yes, think of that land of the Gone-Away Souls
And its growing hosts of friends
Who will hail my bark when it touches shore
Where the last brief journey ends.

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SIRIUS

SINCE Sirius crossed the Milky Way
Full sixty thousand years have gone;
Yet hour by hour, and day by day,
This tireless star speeds on and on.

Methinks he must be moved to mirth
By that droll tale of Genesis,
Which says creation had its birth
For such a puny world as this.

To hear how One who fashioned all
Those Solar systems, tier on tiers,
Expressed in little Adam's fall
The purpose of a million spheres.

And, witness of the endless plan,
To splendid wrath he must be wrought
By pigmy creeds presumptuous man
Sends forth as God's primeval thought.

Perchance from half a hundred stars
He hears as many curious things;
From Venus, Jupiter, and Mars,
And Saturn with the beauteous rings.

There may be students of the Cause
Who send their revelations out,
And formulate their codes of laws,
With heavens for faith and hells for doubt.

On planets old ere form or place
Was lent to earth, may dwell—who knows—
A God-like and perfected race
That hails great Sirius as he goes.

In Zones that circle moon and sun,
'Twixt world and world, he may see souls
Whose span of earthly life is done,
Still journeying up to higher goals.

And on dead planets grey and cold
Grim spectral souls, that harbored hate
Life after life, he may behold
Descending to a darker fate.

And on his grand majestic course
He may have caught one glorious sight
Of that vast shining central Source
From which proceeds all Life, all Light.

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Since Sirius crossed the Milky Way
Full sixty thousand years have gone;
No mortal man may bid him stay,
No mortal man may speed him on.

No mortal mind may comprehend
What is beyond, what was before;
To God be glory without end,
Let man be humble and adore.

MY FAITH

My faith is rooted in no written creed;
And there are those, who call me heretic;
Yet year on year, though I be well, or sick,
Or opulent, or in the slough of need,
If, light of foot, fair Life trips by me pleasuring,
Or, by the rule of pain, old Time stands measuring
The dull drab moments—still ascends my cry
"God reigns on high;
He doeth all things well."

Not much I prize, or one, or any brand
Of theologic lore; nor think too well
Of generally accepted heaven and hell.
But faith and knowledge build at Love's command
A beauteous heaven; a heaven of thought all clarified
Of hate, and fear, and doubt; a heaven of rarified
And perfect trust; and from that heaven I cry
"God reigns on high.
Whatever is, is best."

My faith refuses to accept the "fall,"
It sees man ever as a child of God
Growing in wisdom as new realms are trod
Until the Christ in him is One with All.
From this full consciousness my faith is borrowing
Light to illuminate Life's darkest sorrowing.
Whatever woes assail me still I cry
"God reigns on high;
He doeth all things well"

My faith finds prayer the language of the heart
Which gives us converse with the hosts unseen;
And those who linger in the vales between
The Here and Yonder in these prayers take part.
My dead come near, and say, "Death means not perishing;
Cherish us in your thoughts; for by that cherishing
Shall severed links be welded bye and bye."
God reigns on high;
Whatever is, is best.

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War Mothers

In the old times of peace we went our ways,
Through proper days
Of little joys and tasks. Lonely at times,
When from the steeple sounded wedding-chimes,
Telling to all the world some maid was wife;
But taking patiently our part in life
As it was portioned us by Church and State,
Believing it our fate.
    Our thoughts all chaste
Held yet a secret wish to love and mate
    Ere youth and virtue should go quite to waste.
But men we criticized for lack of strength,
And kept them at arm's length.

Then the war came——
The world was all aflame!
The men we had thought dull and void of power
Were heroes in an hour.
He who had seemed a slave to petty greed
Showed masterful in that great time of need.
He who had plotted for his neighbor's pelf,
Now for his fellows offered up himself.
And we were only women, forced by war
To sacrifice the things worth living for.

Something within us broke;
    Something within us woke;
        The wild cave-woman spoke.

When we heard the sound of drumming,
    As our soldiers went to camp,
    Heard them tramp, tramp, tramp;
As we watched to see them coming,
    And they looked at us and smiled
    (Yes, looked back at us and smiled)
As they filed along by hillock and by hollow,
    Then our hearts were so beguiled
        That, for many and many a day,
        We dreamed we heard them say,
"Oh, follow, follow, follow!"
    And the distant, rolling drum
    Called us, "Come, come, come!"
        Till our virtue seemed a thing to give away.

THERE is something in the sound of drum and fife
That wakes all the savage instincts into life.

War had swept ten thousand years away from earth.
We were primal once again.

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These were males, not modern men;
We were females meant to bring their sons to birth,
And we could not wait for any formal rite.
We could hear them calling to us, "Come to-night;
For to-morrow, at the dawn,
We move on!"
And the drum
Bellowed, "Come, come, come!"
And the fife
Whistled, "Life, life, life!"

So they moved on and fought and bled and died;
Honored and mourned, they are the nation's pride.
We fought our battles, too; but with the tide
Of our red blood we gave the world new lives.
Because we were not wives
We are dishonored. Is it noble, then,
To break God's laws only by killing men
To save one's country from destruction? We
Took no man's life but gave our chastity,
And sinned the ancient sin
To plant young trees and fill felled forests in.

O clergy of the land,
Bible in hand,
All reverently you stand,
On holy thoughts intent,
While barren wives receive the sacrament!
Had you the open vision you could see
Phantoms of infants murdered in the womb
Who never knew a cradle or a tomb
Hovering about these wives accusingly.

Bestow the sacrament! Their sins are not well known—
Ours to the four winds of the earth are blown.

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THE TRIP TO MARS

OH! by and by we shall hear the cry,
"This is the way to Mars."
Come take a trip, on the morning Ship;
It sails by the Isle of Stars.

"A glorious view of planets new
We promise by night and day.
Past dying suns our good ship runs,
And we pause at the Milky Way."

I am almost sure we will take that tour
Together, my dear, my dear.
For, ever have we, by land and sea,
Gone journeying far and near.

Out over the deep—o'er mountain steep,
We have traveled mile on mile;
And to sail away to the Martian Bay,
Oh! that were a trip worth while.

Our ship will race through seas of space
Up into the Realms of Light,
Till the whirling ball of the earth grows small,
And is utterly lost to sight.

Through the nebulous spawn where planets are born
We shall pass with sails well furled,
And with eager eyes we will scan the skies,
For the sights of a new-made world.

From the derelict barque of a sun gone dark,
Adrift on our fair ship's path,
A beacon star shall guide us afar,
And far from the comet's wrath.

Oh! many a start of pulse and heart
We have felt at the sights of land.
But what would we do if the dream came true,
And we sighted the Martian strand?

So, if some day you come and say,
"They are sailing to Mars, I hear."
I want you to know, I am ready to go,—
All ready, my dear, my dear.

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EARTH BOUND

NEW Paradise and groom and bride;
The World was all their own;
Her heart swelled full of love and pride;
Yet were they quite alone?
"Now how is it, oh how is it, and why is it," (in fear
All silent to herself she spake) "that something strange
seems here?"

Along the garden paths they walked;
The moon was at its height.
And lover-wise they strolled and talked;
But something was not right.
And "Who is that, now who is that, oh who is that"
quoth she
(All silent to her heart she spake), "that seems to
follow me?"

He drew her closer to his side;
She felt his lingering kiss;
And yet a shadow seemed to glide
Between her heart and his.
And "What is that, now what is that, oh what is that,"
she said
(All silent to herself she spake), "that minds me of the
dead?"

They wandered back by beds of bloom;
They climbed a winding stair;
They crossed the threshold of their room;
But Something waited there.
"Now who is this, and what is this, and where is this,"
she cried
(All silent was the cry she made), "that comes to haunt
and hide?"

Wide-eyed she lay, the while he slept;
She could not name her fear.
But Something from her bedside crept
Just as the dawn drew near.
(She did not know, she could not know, how could
she know who came
To haunt the home of one whose hand, had dug her
grave of shame.)

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A Son Speaks

MOTHER, sit down, for I have much to say
Anent this wide-spread, ever-growing theme
Of Woman and her virtues and her rights.

I left you for the large, loud world of men,
When I had lived one little score of years.
I judged all women by you, and my heart
Was filled with high esteem and reverence
For your angelic sex; and for the wives,
The sisters, daughters, mothers of my friends
I held but holy thoughts. To fallen stars
(Of whom you told me in our last sweet talk,
Warning me of the dangers in my path)
I gave wide pity as you bade me to,
Saying their sins harked back to my base sex.

Now, listen, mother mine: Ten years have passed
Since that clean-minded and pure-bodied youth,
Thinking to write his name upon the stars,
Went from your presence. He returns to you
Fallen from his high altitude of thought,
Hiding deep scars of sins upon his soul,
His fair illusions shattered and destroyed.
And would you know the story of his fall?

He sat beside a good man's honored wife
At her own table. She was beautiful
As woods in early autumn. Full of soft
And subtle witcheries of voice and look—
His senior, both in knowledge and in years.

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The boyish admiration of his glance
Was white as April sunlight when it falls
Upon a blooming tree, until she leaned
So close her rounded body sent quick thrills
Along his nerves. He thought it accident
And moved a little; soon she leaned again.
The half-hid beauties of her heaving breast
Rising and falling under scented lace;
The teasing tendrils of her fragrant hair,
With intermittent touches on his cheek,
Changed the boy's interest to the man's desire.
She saw that first young madness in his eyes,
Smiled, and fanned the flame. That was his fall;
And as some mangled fly may crawl away
And leave his wings behind him in the web,
So were his wings of faith in womanhood
Left in the meshes of her sensuous net.

The youth, forced into sudden manhood, went
Seeking the lost ideal of his dreams.
He met, in churches and in drawing-rooms,
Women who wore the mask of innocence
And basked in public favor, yet who seemed
To find their pleasure playing with men's hearts,
As children play with loaded guns. He heard
(Until the tale fell dull upon his ears)
The unsolicited complaints of wives
And mothers all unsatisfied with life
While crowned with every blessing earth can give,
Longing for God knows what to bring content;
And openly or with appealing look
Asking for sympathy. (The first blind step
That leads from wifely honor down to shame
Is ofttimes hid with flowers of sympathy.)

He saw proud women who would flush and pale
With sense of outraged modesty if one
Spoke of the ancient sin before them, bare
To all men's sight, or flimsily conceal
By veils that bid adventurous eyes proceed,
Charms meant alone for lover and for child.
He saw chaste virgins tempt and tantalize,
Lure and deny, invite—and then refuse,
And drive men forth, half crazed, to wantons' arms.

Mother, you taught me there were but two kinds
Of women in the world—the good and bad.
But you have been too sheltered in the safe,
Old-fashioned sweetness of your quiet life
To know how women of these modern days
Make license of their new-found liberty.
Why! I have been more tempted and more shocked
By belles and beauties in the social whirl,
By trusted wives and mothers in their homes,
Than by the women of the underworld
Who sell their favors. Do you think me mad?
No, mother; I am sane, but very sad.
I miss my boyhood's faith in Woman's worth—
Torn from my heart by "good folks" of the earth.

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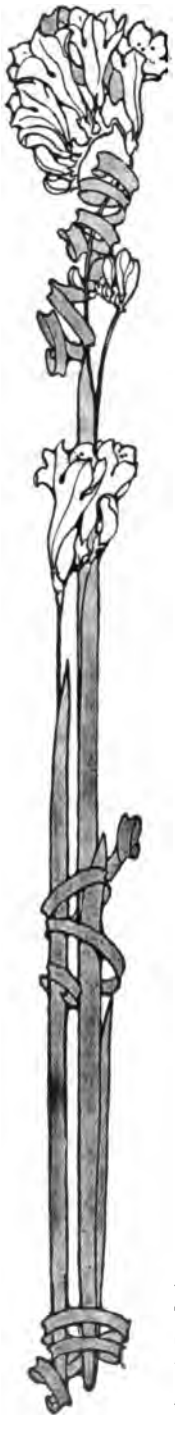
THE WELL-BORN



So many, many people—people in the world;
So few great souls, love ordered, well begun,
In answer to the fertile mother need.
So few who seem
The image of the Maker's mortal dream;
So many born of mere propinquity—
Of lustful habit, or of accident.
Their mothers felt
No mighty all-compelling wish to see
Their bosoms garden-places
Abloom with flower faces;
No tidal wave swept o'er them with its flood;
No thrill of flesh or heart; no leap of blood;
No glowing fire, flaming to white desire
For mating and for motherhood;
Yet they bore children.
God, how mankind misuses thy command,
To populate the earth.
How low is brought high birth.
How low the woman; when, inert as spawn
Left on the sands to fertilise,
She is the means through which the race goes on.
Not so the first intent.
Birth, as the Supreme Mind conceived it, meant
The clear, imperious call of mate to mate
And the clear answer. Only thus and then
Are fine, well-ordered and potential lives
Brought into being. Not by Church or State
Can birth be made legitimate,
Unless
Love in its fulness bless
Creation so ordains its lofty laws
That man, while greater in all other things
Is lesser, in the generative cause.
The father may be merely man, the male;
Yet more than female must the mother be.
The woman who would fashion
Souls, for the use of earth and angels meet,
Must entertain a high and holy passion,
Not rank, or wealth, or influence of kings
Can give a soul its dower
Of majesty and power,
Unless the mother brings
Great love to that great hour.

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KIM

KIM, in that tender canine heart of yours
What faithfulness endures.
What sterling qualities of loyal friend
And fearless comrade blend,
Making you strong to rescue and defend.

In you we find
The quick perception of a thinking mind,
Keen understanding, cheerfulness and tact,
And love so vast it permeates each act.

Often we cannot think of you as dumb,
But feel that speech must come
From that too silent lip,
Adding the last touch to companionship.

Lifting your shaggy locks and looking down
Into your eyes of brown,
Something I see that makes me more and more
Doubt that religious lore,
That orthodox, unyielding lore, which gives
No spark of soul to anything that lives
Save biped man. Why Kim in your dear eyes
There lies
The chief foundation of man's Paradise—
Unquestioning, undoubting love, and faith
That would walk bravely through the gates of death,
If so your Master or your Mistress led.
When all is said
It is of love and faith we build our Heaven—
Dear Kim
I cannot question that you will be given
Your green celestial lawn, your astral sea,
And life with him and me
Yea, life with him and me,
Since we to you are what God is to us.

And oh! to love God thus!
With such supreme devotion to obey
And ask no reason why; by night or day
To have no will or choice,
But just to follow the Beloved Voice.
To trust implicitly—to feel no fear
Or discontent or doubt since He is near.

Let me look deeper, Kim, in your dear heart;
Impart
To me that fulness of unquestioning love
That I may give my God thereof.

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THE PLOW OF GOD

IF you listen you will hear, from east to west,
Growing sounds of discontent and deep unrest.
It is just the progress-driven Plow of God,
Tearing up the well-worn, custom-bounded sod,
Shaping out each old tradition-trodden track
Into furrows—fertile furrows, rich and black.
Oh, what harvests they will yield
When they widen to a field!

They will widen, they will broaden, day by day,
As the progress-driven plow keeps on its way.
It will riddle all the ancient roads that lead
Into places of selfishness and greed.
It will tear away the almshouse and the slum,
That the little homes and garden-plots may come.
Yes, the gardens green and sweet
Shall replace the stony street.

Let the wise men hear the menace that is blent
In this ever-growing sound of discontent.
Let him hear the rising clamor of the race
That the few shall yield the many larger space;
For the crucial hour is coming when the soil
Must be given to, or taken back, by Toil.
Oh, that mighty Plow of God—
Hear it breaking through the sod!

THE BED

A harsh and homely monosyllable,
Abrupt and musicless, and at its best
An inartistic object to the eye,
Yet in this brief and troubled life of man
How full of majesty the part it plays!
It is the cradle which receives the soul,
Naked and wailing, from the Maker's hand.
It is the throne of Love's enlightenment;
And when death offers back to God again
The borrowed spirit, this the holy shrine
From which the hills delectable are seen.
Through all the anxious journey to that goal
It is man's friend, physician, comforter.
When labor wearies, and when pleasure palls,
And the tired heart lets faith slip from its grasp,
'Tis here new courage and new strength are found,
While doubt and darkness change to hope and light.
It is the common ground between two spheres
Where men and angels meet and converse hold.
It is the confidant of hidden woe
Masked from the world beneath a smiling brow.
Into its silent breast young wakeful joy
Whispers its secret through the starlit hours,
And, like a white-robed priestess, oft it hears
The wild confession of a crime-stained soul
That looks unflinching in the eyes of men.
A common word, a thing unbeautiful,
Yet in this brief, eventful life of man
How large and varied is the part it plays!

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WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

I

WHAT have you done, and what are you doing with life, O Man?
O Average Man of the world—
Average Man of the Christian world we call civilized?
What have you done to pay for the labor pains of the mother who bore you?
On earth you occupy space; you consume oxygen from the air;
And what do you give in return for these things?
Who is better that you live, and strive, and toil?
Or that you live through the toiling and striving of others?
As you pass down the street does any one look on you and say,
"There goes a good son, a true husband, a wise father, a fine citizen?
A man whose strong hand is ready to help a neighbor,
A man to trust?" And what do women say of you?
Unto their own souls what do women say?
Do they say: "He helped to make the road easier for tired feet?
To broaden the narrow horizon for aching eyes?
He helped us to higher ideals of womanhood?"
Look into your own heart and answer, O Average Man of the world,
Of the Christian world we call civilized.

II

What do men think of you, what do they think and say of you,
O Average Woman of the world?
Do they say: "There is a woman with a great heart,
Loyal to her sex, and above envy and evil speaking;
There is a daughter, wife, mother, with a purpose in life;
She can be trusted to mould the minds of little children;
She knows how to be good without being dull;
How to be glad and to make others glad without descending to folly;
She is one who illuminates the path wherein she walks;
One who awakens the best in every human being she meets"?
Look into your heart, O Woman! and answer this:
What are you doing with the beautiful years?
Is your today a better thing than was your yesterday?
Have you grown in knowledge, grace, and usefulness?
Or are you ravelling out the wonderful fabric knit by Time,
And throwing away the threads?
Make answer, O Woman! Average Woman of the Christian world.

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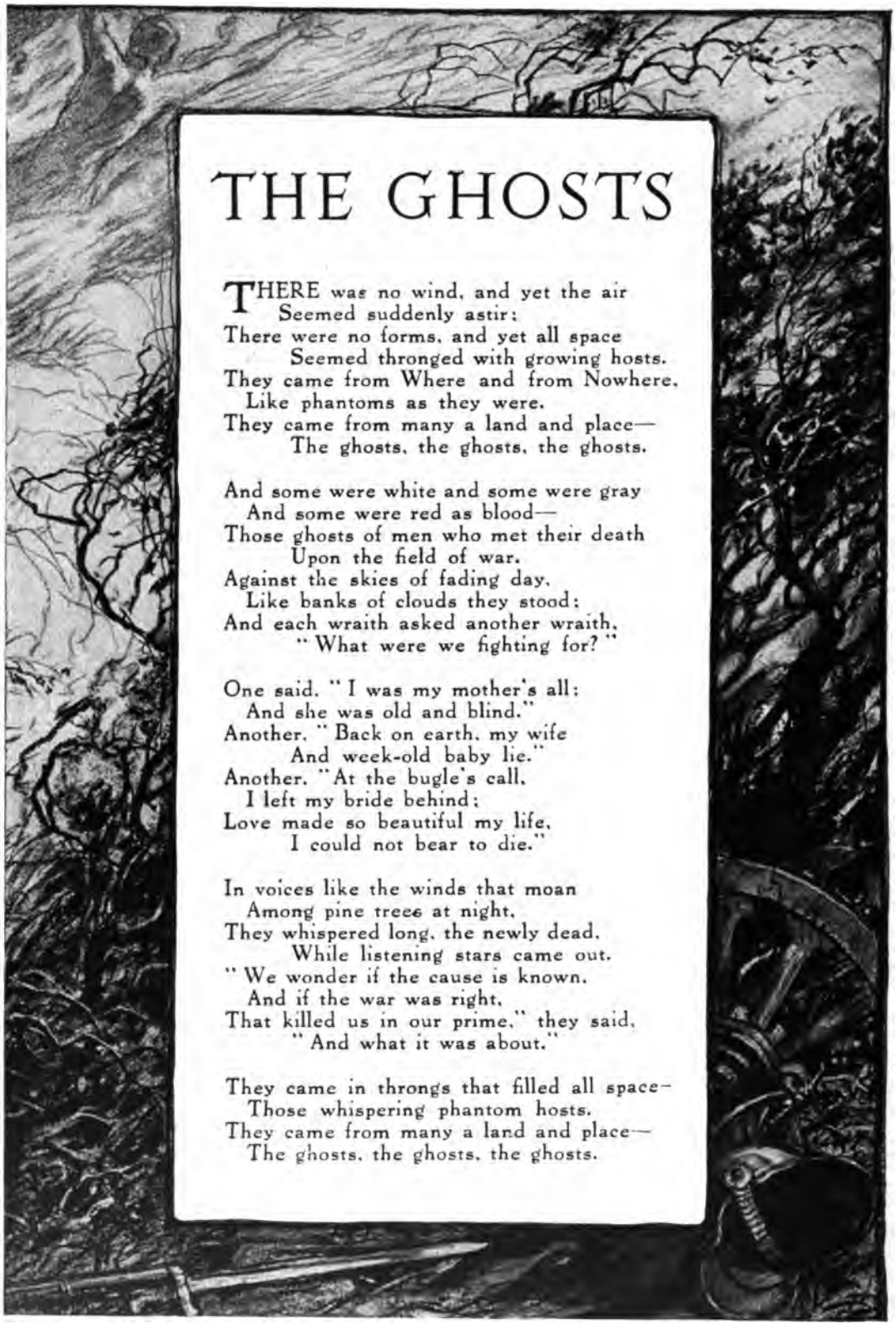

THE GHOSTS

THERE was no wind, and yet the air
Seemed suddenly astir;
There were no forms, and yet all space
Seemed thronged with growing hosts.
They came from Where and from Nowhere,
Like phantoms as they were.
They came from many a land and place—
The ghosts, the ghosts, the ghosts.

And some were white and some were gray
And some were red as blood—
Those ghosts of men who met their death
Upon the field of war.
Against the skies of fading day,
Like banks of clouds they stood;
And each wraith asked another wraith,
"What were we fighting for?"

One said, "I was my mother's all;
And she was old and blind."
Another, "Back on earth, my wife
And week-old baby lie."
Another, "At the bugle's call,
I left my bride behind;
Love made so beautiful my life,
I could not bear to die."

In voices like the winds that moan
Among pine trees at night,
They whispered long, the newly dead,
While listening stars came out.
"We wonder if the cause is known,
And if the war was right,
That killed us in our prime," they said,
"And what it was about."

They came in throngs that filled all space—
Those whispering phantom hosts.
They came from many a land and place—
The ghosts, the ghosts, the ghosts.

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THE UNWED MOTHER TO THE WIFE

I HAD been almost happy for an hour,
Lost to the world that knew me in the park
Among strange faces; while my little girl
Leaped with the squirrels, chirruped with the birds,
And with the sunlight glowed. She was so dear,
So beautiful, so sweet; and for the time
The rose of love, shorn of its thorn of shame,
Bloomed in my heart. Then suddenly you passed.
I sat alone upon the public bench;
You, with your lawful husband, rode in state;
And when your eyes fell on me and my child,
They were not eyes, but daggers, poison tipped.

God! how good women slaughter with a look!
And, like cold steel, your glance cut through my heart
Struck every petal from the rose of love
And left the ragged stalk alive with thorns.

My little one came running to my side
And called me Mother. It was like a blow
Between the eyes; and made me sick with pain.
And then it seemed as if each bird and breeze
Took up the word, and changed its syllables
From Mother into Magdalene; and cried
My shame to all the world.

It was your eyes
Which did all this. But listen now to me
(Not you alone, but all the barren wives
Who, like you, flaunt their virtue in the face
Of fallen women): I do chance to know
The crimes you think are hidden from all men—
(Save one who took your gold and sold his skill
And jeopardized his name for your base ends.)

I know how you have sunk your soul in sense
Like any wanton; and refused to bear
The harvest of your pleasure-planted seed;
I know how you have crushed the tender bud
Which held a soul; how you have blighted it;
And made the holy miracle of birth
A wicked travesty of God's design.
Yea, many buds, which might be blossoms now
And beautify your selfish, arid life,
Have been destroyed, because you chose to keep
The aimless freedom and the purposeless
Self-seeking liberty of childless wives.

I was an untaught girl. By nature led,
By love and passion blinded, I became
An unwed mother. You, an honored wife,
Refuse the crown of motherhood, defy
The laws of nature, and fling baby souls

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Back in the face of God. And yet you dare
Call me a sinner, and yourself a saint;
And all the world smiles on you, and its doors
Swing wide at your approach.
I stand outside.

Surely there must be higher courts than earth,
Where you and I will some day meet and be
Weighed by a larger justice.

HERESY

Nothing within me responds to the story of Adam and Eve;
And Genesis seems like a tale not meant for the world to believe:
Yet when I wake in the dawn, if the skies are gray or gold,
The love, the love in the heart of me, for God, can never be told.

Jesus to me is a man who lived the life divine;
And I think of his birth as a human birth, just like yours and mine!
But the love down deep in my heart, that is sweeter than any other,
Is the great uplifting, tender love I give to Christ, my brother.

I know at times I have erred, as all who are mortal will;
By doing the wrong thing well, or doing the right thing ill:
But nobody else can atone for the paths my feet have trod;
And I know, I know by the love in my heart, I can make it right with God.

The world has a thousand creeds, and never a one have I;
Nor church of my own, though a million spires are pointing the way on high.
But I float on the bosom of faith that bears me along like a river;
And the lamp of my soul is alight with love, for life, and the world, and the Giver.

I know how brief is my span, and I know how certain is death;
And I send out a prayer of love and trust with the breathing of every breath;
And heretic though I am outside of the pale of creeds,
I have love in my heart for God and man—and I think it is all one needs.

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The Crimes of Peace

MUSING upon the tragedies of earth,
Of each new horror which each hour gives birth,
Of sins that scar and cruelties that blight
Life's little season, meant for man's delight,
Methought those monstrous and repellent crimes
Which hate engenders in war-heated times,
To God's great heart bring not so much despair
As other sins which flourish everywhere
And in all times—bold sins, bare-faced and proud,
Unchecked by college, and by Church allowed,
Lifting their lusty heads like ugly weeds
Above wise precepts and religious creeds,
And growing rank in prosperous days of peace
Think you the evils of this world would cease
With war's cessation?
If God's eyes know tears,
Methinks he weeps more for the wasted years
And the lost meaning of this earthly life—
This big, brief life—than over bloody strife.
Yea; there are mean, lean sins God must abhor
More than the fatted, blood-drunk monster, War.

Looking from his place, looking from his high place among the stars, God saw a peaceful land—
A land of fertile fields and golden harvests—and great cities whose innumerable spires pierced the vault of heaven, like bayonets of an invading army.
And God said, speaking unto himself aloud, God said:
"Peace and power and plenty have I given unto this land; and those tall steeples are monuments to me.
Now let my people reveal themselves, that I may see their works, done in my name in a fertile land of peace.
I will withdraw mine eyes from other worlds that I may behold them, that I may behold these people to whom I sent Christ—they whose innumerable spires pierce my blue vault like bayonets."

God saw the restless, idle rich in club and cabaret,
Meat-gorged, wine-filled, they played and preened and danced till dawn o' day;
They played at sports; they played at love; they played at being gay.
They were but empty, silk-clad shells; their souls had leaked away.
He saw the sweat-shop and the mill where little children toiled,
The sunless rooms where mothers slaved and unborn souls were spoiled;
While those whose greedy, selfish lives had thrust the toilers there,
He saw whirled down broad avenues, clothed all with raiment fair.

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He saw in homes made beautiful with all that gold can give
Unhappy souls at odds with life, not knowing how to live.
He saw fair, pampered women turn from motherhood's sweet joy,
Obsessed with methods to prevent or mania to destroy.
He saw men sell their souls to vice and avarice and greed;
He heard race quarreling with race and creed decrying creed,
And shameful wealth and waste he saw, and shameful want and need.

He saw bold little children come from church and schoolroom, blind
To suffering of lesser things, unfeeling and unkind;
He heard them taunt the poor, and tease their furred and feathered kin;
And no voice spake from home or church, to tell them this was sin.
He heard the cry of wounded things, the wasteful gun's report;
He saw the morbid craze to kill, which Christian men called sport.

And then God hid his grieving face behind a wall of cloud,
On earth they said, "A thunder-storm"—but God had wept aloud.

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INTERLUDE

THE days grow shorter, the nights grow longer,
The headstones thicken along the way;
And life grows sadder but love grows stronger
For those who walk with us, day by day.

The tear comes quicker, the laugh comes slower,
The courage is lesser to do and dare;
And the tide of joy in the heart runs lower
And seldom covers the reefs of care.

But all true things in the world seem truer,
And the better things of the earth seem best;
And friends are dearer as friends are fewer,
And love is all as our sun dips west.

Then let us clasp hands as we walk together,
And let us speak softly, in love's sweet tone;
For no man knows, on the morrow, whether
We two pass by, or but one alone.

A SONG OF FAITH

My glass of life with its brew of Being,
I lift, with a toast, to the Universe.
Though black guns bellow and mad men curse
And a sick world hurries from bad to worse
I trust in the might of the One All Seeing—
The One All Knowing, to set things right.

Though hate in the heart of the race may thunder,
In rifle and cannon and bursting shell,
And the sea and the air their tales may tell,
Of the minds of mortals that seethe with hell,—
Yet in God's vast plan there can be no blunder—
He is blazing the trail for the Super-man.

The creeds of ages may totter and tumble,
And fall in ruins, but out of the dust,
And out of the wreckage of old things, must
Rise better religion, and stronger trust,
And faith that knows, and knowing is humble.
(Humility ever with knowledge goes.)

This speck in space on its orbit spinning,
Swings safely along without aid from me,
A Mind that can order, an Eye that can see,
Back of, and over it all must be—
And will be—and was from the first beginning,
Not mine to question or doubt the Cause.

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But mine to worship the Mighty Master
And Maker of all things; mine to raise
Ever an anthem of love and praise
In the light of the sun or in shadowed ways,—
In the world's bright hour, or in world disaster,
To see His glory and sing His power.

So my glass of life with its brew of Being
I lift, with a song of the One All Seeing—
Of the One All Knowing; though earth seems hurled
Out into chaos, I see it lying
In God's great palm—and my faith undying
Cries, "Lo! He is moulding a better world."

THE SPUR

I asked a rock beside the road
What joy existence lent.
It answered, "For a million years
My heart has been content."

I asked the truffle-seeking swine, as rooting by he went,
"What is the keynote of your life?" He grunted out, "Content."

I asked a slave, who toiled and sang, just what his singing meant.
He plodded on his changeless way, and said, "I am content."

I asked a plutocrat of greed, on what his thoughts were bent.
He chinked the silver in his purse, and said "I am content."

I asked the mighty forest tree from whence its force was sent.
Its thousand branches spoke as one, and said, "From discontent."

I asked the message speeding on, by what great law was rent
God's secret from the waves of space. It said, "From discontent."

I asked the marble, where the works of God and man were blent,
What brought the statue from the block. It answered, "Discontent."

I asked an Angel, looking down on earth with gaze intent,
How man should rise to larger growth. Quoth he, "Through discontent."

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MEDITATIONS

His.

I WAS so proud of you last night, dear girl,
While man with man was striving for your smile.
You never lost your head, nor once dropped down
From your high place
As queen in that gay whirl.

(It takes more poise to wear a little crown
With modesty and grace
Than to adorn the lordlier thrones of earth.)

You seem so free from artifice and wile;
And in your eyes I read
Encouragement to my unspoken thought.
My heart is eloquent with words to plead
Its cause of passion; but my questioning mind,
Knowing how love is blind,
Dwells on the pros and cons, and God knows what.

My heart cries with each beat,
"She is so beautiful, so pure, so sweet,
So more than dear."
And then I hear
The voice of Reason, asking: "Would she meet
Life's common duties with good common sense?"

Could she bear quiet evenings at your hearth
And not be sighing for gay scenes of mirth?
If, some great day, love's mighty recompense
For chastity surrendered came to her,
If she felt stir
Beneath her heart a little pulse of life,
Would she rejoice with holy pride and wonder
And find new glory in the name of wife?
Or would she plot with hell, and seek to plunder
Love's sanctuary, and cast away its treasure,
That she might keep her freedom and her pleasure?
Could she be loyal mate and mother dutiful?
Or is she only some bright hothouse bloom,
Seedless and beautiful,
Meant just for decoration, and for show?
Alone here in my room,
I hear this voice of Reason. My poor heart
Has ever but one answer to impart,
"I love her so."

Hers.

After the ball last night, when I came home
I stood before my mirror, and took note
Of all that men call beautiful. Delight,
Keen, sweet delight, possessed me, when I saw

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My own reflection smiling on me there,
Because your eyes, through all the swirling hours,
And in your slow good-night, had made a fact
Of what before I fancied might be so;
Yet knowing how men lie by look and act,
I still had doubted But I doubt no more,
I know you love me, love me. And I feel
Your satisfaction in my comeliness.

Beauty and youth, good health and willing mind,
A spotless reputation, and a heart
Longing for mating and for motherhood,
And lips unsullied by another's kiss—
These are the riches I can bring to you.

But as I sit here, thinking of it all
In the clear light of morning, sudden fear
Has seized upon me. What has been your past?
From out the jungle of old reckless years,
May serpents crawl across our path some day
And pierce us with their fangs? Oh, I am not
A prude or bigot; but I have not lived
A score and three full years in ignorance
Of human nature. Much I can condone;
For well I know our kinship to the earth
And all created things. Why, even I
Have felt the burden of virginity,
When flowers and birds and golden butterflies
In early spring were mating; and I know
How loud that call of sex must sound to man
Above the feeble protest of the world.
But I can hear from depths within my soul
The voices of my unborn children cry
For rightful heritage. (May God attune
The souls of men, that they may hear and heed
That plaintive voice above the call of sex;
And may the world's weak protest swell into
A thunderous diapason—a demand
For cleaner fatherhood)
Oh, love, come near;
Look in my eyes, and say I need not fear.

TRUE CHARITY

I gave a beggar from my little store
Of well earned gold. He spent the shining ore
And came again, and yet again, still cold
And hungry as before.

I have a thought, and through that thought of mine
He found himself, the man, supreme, divine!
Fed, clothed, and crowned with blessings manifold
And now he begs no more

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A GOOD SPORT

I WAS a little lad, and the older boys called to me from the pier.
They called to me: "Be a sport; be a sport! Leap in and swim!"
I leaped in and swam, though I had never been taught a stroke.
Then I was made a hero, and they all shouted: "Well done! Well done.
Brave boy; you are a sport, a good sport!"
And I was very glad.

But now I wish I had learned to swim the right way,
Or had never learned at all.
Now I regret that day,
For it led me to my fall.

I was a youth, and I heard the older men talking of the road to wealth.
They talked of bulls and bears, of buying on margins.
And they said: "Be a sport, my boy; plunge in and win, or lose it all!
It is the only way to fortune."
So I plunged in and won; and the older men patted me on the back.
And they said, "You are a sport, my boy, a good sport!"
And I was very glad

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UNIV. OF
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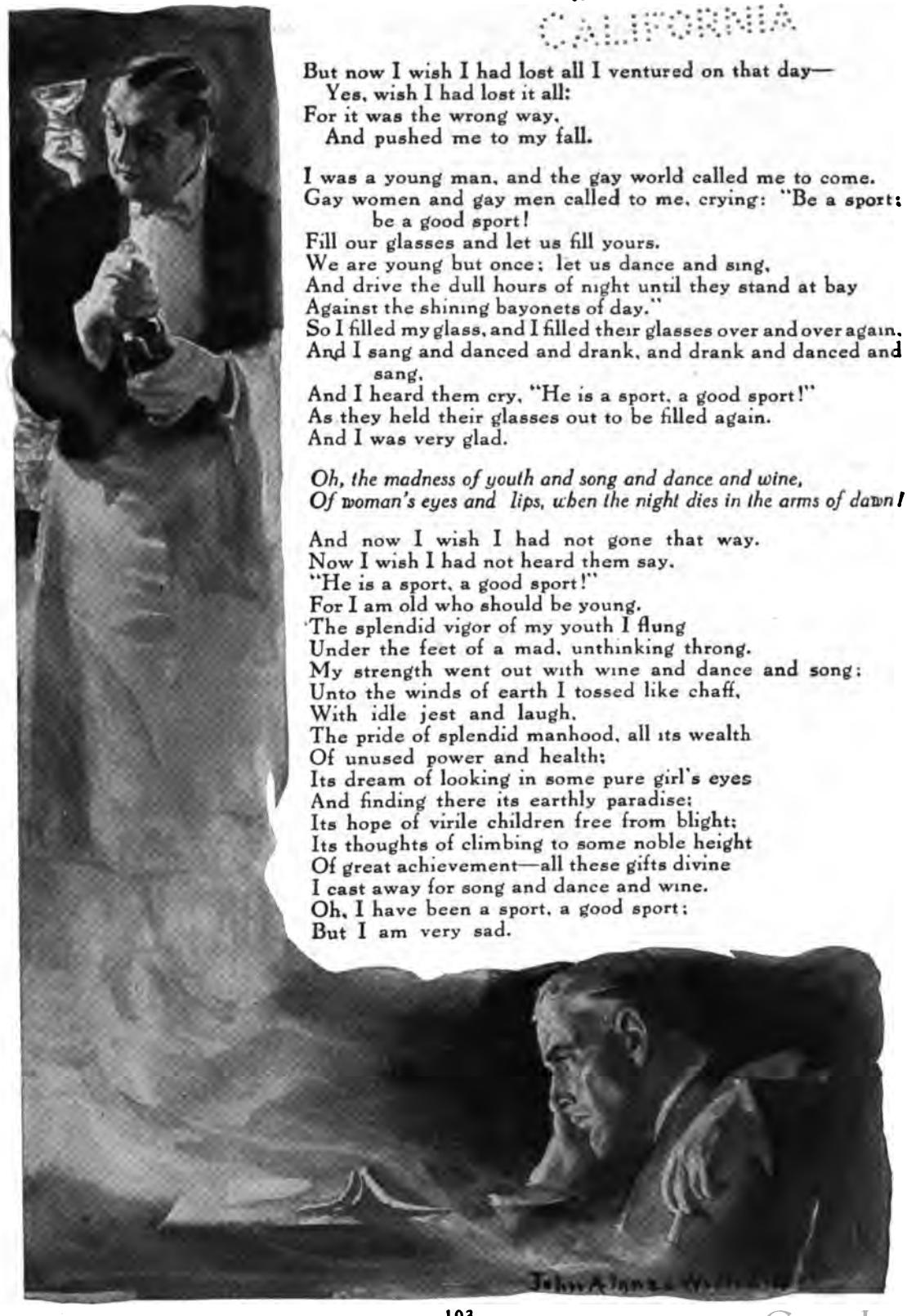

But now I wish I had lost all I ventured on that day—
Yes, wish I had lost it all:
For it was the wrong way,
And pushed me to my fall.

I was a young man, and the gay world called me to come.
Gay women and gay men called to me, crying: "Be a sport;
be a good sport!
Fill our glasses and let us fill yours.
We are young but once; let us dance and sing,
And drive the dull hours of night until they stand at bay
Against the shining bayonets of day."
So I filled my glass, and I filled their glasses over and over again.
And I sang and danced and drank, and drank and danced and
sang,
And I heard them cry, "He is a sport, a good sport!"
As they held their glasses out to be filled again.
And I was very glad.

Oh, the madness of youth and song and dance and wine,
Of woman's eyes and lips, when the night dies in the arms of dawn!

And now I wish I had not gone that way.
Now I wish I had not heard them say,
"He is a sport, a good sport!"
For I am old who should be young.
The splendid vigor of my youth I flung
Under the feet of a mad, unthinking throng.
My strength went out with wine and dance and song:
Unto the winds of earth I tossed like chaff,
With idle jest and laugh,
The pride of splendid manhood, all its wealth
Of unused power and health;
Its dream of looking in some pure girl's eyes
And finding there its earthly paradise;
Its hope of virile children free from blight;
Its thoughts of climbing to some noble height
Of great achievement—all these gifts divine
I cast away for song and dance and wine.
Oh, I have been a sport, a good sport;
But I am very sad.

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A BACHELOR TO A MARRIED FLIRT

ALL that a man can say of woman's charms,
Mine eyes have spoken and my lips have told
To you a thousand times. Your perfect arms,
(A replica from that lost Melos mould)
The fair, firm crescents of your bosom (shown
With full intent to make their splendors known.)

Your eyes (that mask with innocence their guile),
The (artful) artlessness of all your ways,
Your kiss-provoking mouth, its lure, its smile,
All these have had my fond and frequent praise.
And something more than praise to you I gave—
Something which made you know me as your slave.

Yet slaves at times grow mutinous, and rebel,
Here in this morning hour from you apart
The mood is on me to be frank and tell
The thoughts long hidden deep down in my heart:
These thoughts are bitter thorny plants, that grew
Below the flowers of praise I plucked for you.

Those flowery praises, led you to suppose
You were my benefactor. Well, in truth
When lovely woman on dull man bestows
Sweet favors of her beauty and her youth,
He is her debtor. I am yours; and yet
You robbed me while you placed me thus in debt.

I owe you for keen moments when you stirred
My senses with your beauty; when your eyes,
(Your wanton eyes) belied the prudent word
Your curled lips uttered. You are worldly wise
And while you like to set men's hearts on flame
You take no risks in that old passion game.

The carnal, common self of dual me,
Found pleasure in this danger play of yours.
(An egotist man always thinks to be
The victor if his patience but endures,
And holds in leash the bounds of fierce desire,
Until the silly woman's heart takes fire.)

But now it is the Higher Self who speaks:
The Me of me—the inner man—the real—
Who ever dreams his dream and ever seeks
To bring to earth his beautiful ideal.
That life-long dream with all its promised joy
Your soft bedevilments have helped destroy.

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I spoke a little, and he listened much;
There was attention in his eyes, and such
A note of comradeship in his low tone,
I felt no more alone.
There was a kindly interest in his air;
He spoke about the way I dressed my hair,
And praised the gown I wore.
It seemed a thousand, thousand years and more
Since I had been so noticed. Had mine ear
Been used to compliments year after year,
If I had heard you speak
As this man spoke, I had not been so weak.
The innocent beginning
Of all my sinning
Was just the woman's craving to be brought
Into the inner shrine of some man's thought.
You held me there, as sweetheart and as bride;
And then as wife, you left me far outside.
So far, so far, you could not hear me call;
You might, you should, have saved me from my fall.
I was not bad, just lonely, that was all.

A man should offer something to replace
The sweet adventure of the lover's chase
Which ends with marriage, Love's neglected laws
Pave pathways for the "Statutory Cause."

THE MEN-MADE GODS

Said the Kaiser's god to the god of the Czar:
"Hark, hark, how my people pray.
Their faith, methinks, is greater by far
Than all the faiths of the others are;
They know I will help them slay."

Said the god of the Czar: "My people call
In a medley of tongues; they know
I will lend my strength to them one and all.
Wherever they fight their foes shall fall
Like grass where the mowers go."

Then the god of the Gauls spoke out of a cloud
To the god of the king nearby;
"Our people pray, tho' they pray not loud;
They ask for courage to slaughter a crowd,
And to laugh, tho' themselves may die."

And far out into the heart of space
Where a lonely pathway crept
Up over the stars, to a secret place,
Where no light shone but the light of His face,
Christ covered his eyes and wept.

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THE BIRTH OF JEALOUSY

WITH brooding mien and sultry eyes,
Outside the gates of Paradise
Eve sat, and fed the faggot flame
That lit the path whence Adam came.
(Strange are the workings of a woman's mind.)

His giant shade preceded him,
Along the pathway green, and dim;
She heard his swift approaching tread,
But still she sat with drooping head.
(Dark are the jungles of unhappy thought.)

He kissed her mouth, and gazed within
Her troubled eyes; for since their sin,
His love had grown a thousand fold,
But Eve drew back; her face was cold.
(Oh, who can read the cipher of a soul!)

"Now art thou mourning still, sweet wife,"
Spake Adam tenderly, "the life
Of our lost Eden? Why, in thee
All Paradise remains for me."
(Deep, deep the currents in a strong man's heart.)

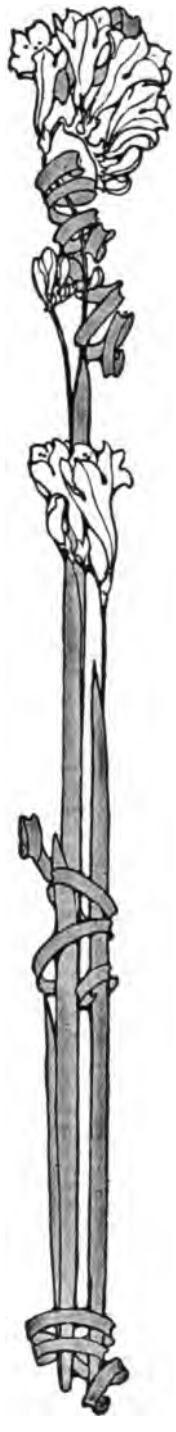
Thus Eve: "Nay, not lost Eden's bliss
I mourn; for heavier woe than this
Wears on me with one thought accursed.
In Adam's life I am not first.
(O, woman's mind! what hells are fashioned there.)

"The serpent whispered Lilith's name:
('Twas thus he drove me to my shame)
'Pluck yonder fruit,' he said, 'and know,
How Adam loved her, long ago.'
(Fools, fools, who wander searching after pain.)

"I ate, and like an ancient scroll,
I saw that other life unroll;
I saw thee, Adam, far from here
With Lilith on a wondrous sphere."
(Bold, bold, the daring of a jealous heart.)

"Nay, tell me not I dreamed it all;
Last night in sleep thou didst let fall
Her name in tenderness; I bowed
My stricken head and cried aloud.
(Vast, vast the torment of a self-made woe.)

"And it was then, and not before,
That Eden shut and barred its door.
Alone in God's great world I seemed,
Whilst thou of thy lost Lilith dreamed.
(Oh, who can measure such wide loneliness.)



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"Now every little breeze that sings,
Sighs Lilith, like thy whisperings.
Oh, where can sorrow hide its face,
When Lilith, Lilith, fills all space?"
(And Adam in the darkness spake no word.)

THE GRADUATES

I saw them beautiful, in fair array upon Commencement Day;
Lissome and lovely, radiant and sweet
As cultured roses, brought to their estate
By careful training. Finished and complete
(As teachers calculate.)

They passed in maiden grace along the aisle,
Leaving the chaste white sunlight of a smile
Upon the gazing throng.
Musing I thought upon their place as mothers of the race.

Oh there are many actors who can play
Greatly, great parts; but rare indeed the soul
Who can be great when cast for some small rôle;
Yet that is what the world most needs; big hearts
That will shine forth and glorify poor parts
In this strange drama, Life! Do they,
Who in full dress-rehearsal pass today
Before admiring eyes, hold in their store
Those fine high principles which keep old Earth
From being only earth; and make men more
Than just mere men? How will they prove their worth
Of years of study? Will they walk abroad
Decked with the plumage of dead bards of God,
The glorious birds? And shall the lamb unborn
Be slain on altars of their vanity?
To some frail sister who has missed the way
Will they give Christ's compassion, or man's scorn?
And will clean manhood linked with honest love,
The victor prove,
When riches, gained by greed dispute the claim?
Will they guard well a husband's home and name,
Or lean down from their altitudes to hear
The voice of flattery speak in the ear
Those lying platitudes which men repeat
To listening Self-Conceit?
Musing I thought upon their place as mothers of the race,
As beautiful they passed in maiden grace.

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RE-

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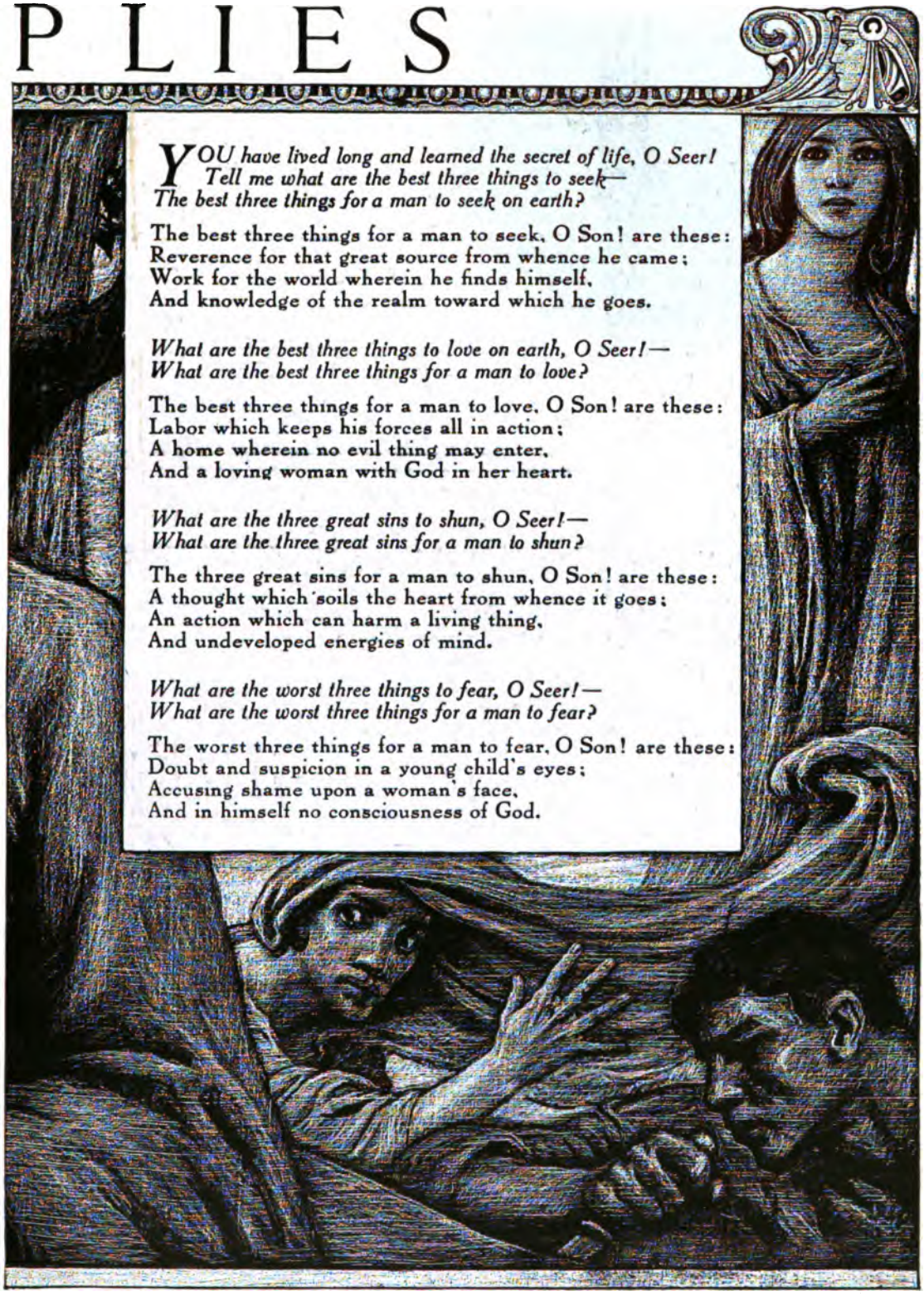
PLIES



YOU have lived long and learned the secret of life, O Seer!
Tell me what are the best three things to seek—
The best three things for a man to seek on earth?

The best three things for a man to seek, O Son! are these:
Reverence for that great source from whence he came;
Work for the world wherein he finds himself,
And knowledge of the realm toward which he goes.

What are the best three things to love on earth, O Seer!—
What are the best three things for a man to love?

The best three things for a man to love, O Son! are these:
Labor which keeps his forces all in action;
A home wherein no evil thing may enter,
And a loving woman with God in her heart.

What are the three great sins to shun, O Seer!—
What are the three great sins for a man to shun?

The three great sins for a man to shun, O Son! are these:
A thought which soils the heart from whence it goes;
An action which can harm a living thing,
And undeveloped energies of mind.

What are the worst three things to fear, O Seer!—
What are the worst three things for a man to fear?

The worst three things for a man to fear, O Son! are these:
Doubt and suspicion in a young child's eyes;
Accusing shame upon a woman's face,
And in himself no consciousness of God.

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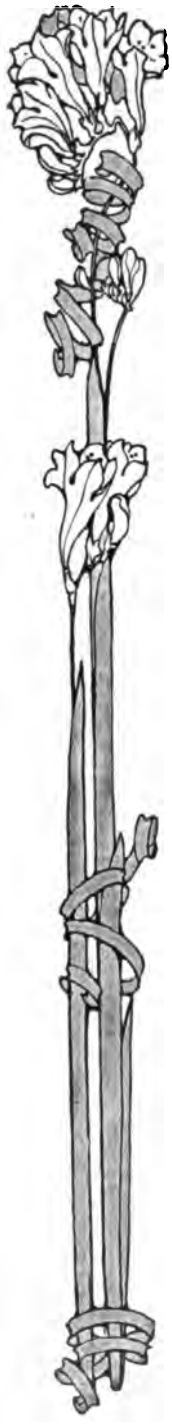
MY FLOWER ROOM



MY Flower Room is such a little place;
Scarce twenty feet by nine; yet in that space
I have met God, yea, many a radiant hour
Have talked with Him, the All-Embracing-Cause,
About his laws.
And He has shown me in each vine and flower
Such miracles of power
That day by day this Flower Room of mine
Has come to be a shrine.

Fed by the self-same soil and atmosphere
Pale, tender shoots appear
Rising to greet the light in that sweet room.
One speeds to crimson bloom,
One slowly creeps to unassuming grace;
One climbs, one trails;
One drinks the light and moisture,
One exhales.
Up through the earth together, stem by stem
Two plants push swiftly in a floral race,
Till one sends forth a blossom like a gem,
And one gives only fragrance.
In a seed
So small it scarce is felt within the hand,
Lie hidden such delights
Of scents and sights,
When by the elements of Nature freed,
As Paradise must have at its command.

From shapeless roots and ugly bulbous things
What gorgeous beauty springs!
Such infinite variety appears
A hundred artists in a hundred years
Could never copy from the floral world
The marvels that in leaf and bud lie curled.
Nor could the most colossal mind of man
Create one little seed of plant or vine
Without assistance from the First Great Plan;
Without the aid divine.

Who but a God
Could draw from light and moisture, heat and cold,
And fashion in earth's mold
A multitude of blooms to deck one sod?
Who but a God!
Not one man knows
Just why the bloom and fragrance of the rose,
Or how its tints were blent;
Or why the white Camelia without scent
Up through the same soil grows;

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Or how the daisy and the violet
And blades of grass first on wild meadows met;
Not one, not one man knows.
The wisest but SUPPOSE.
This Flower Room of mine
Has come to be a shrine;
And I go hence
Each day with larger faith and reverence.

WAR SONNETS

I

War is destruction, wasteful, brutal, yet
The energies of men are brought to play,
And hidden valor by occasion met
Leaps to the light, as precious jewels may
When earthquakes rend the rock. The stress and strain
Of war stir men to do their worst and best.
Heroes are forged on anvils hot with pain
And splendid courage comes but with the test.
Some natures ripen and some virtues bloom
Only in blood-red soil; some souls prove great
Only in moments dark with death or doom.
This is the sad historic jest which fate
Flings to the world, recurring time on time,
Many must fall that one may seem sublime.

II

Above the chaos of impending ills,
Through all the clamor of insistent strife,
Now while the noise of warring nations fills
Each throbbing hour with menaces to life,
I hear the Voice of Progress! Strange indeed
The shadowed pathways that lead up to light.
But as a runner sometimes will recede
That he may so accumulate his might,
Then with a will that needs must be obeyed
Rushes resistless to the goal with ease,
So the whole world seems now to retrograde,
Slips back to war, that it may speed to peace.
And in that backward step it gathers force
For the triumphant finish of its course.

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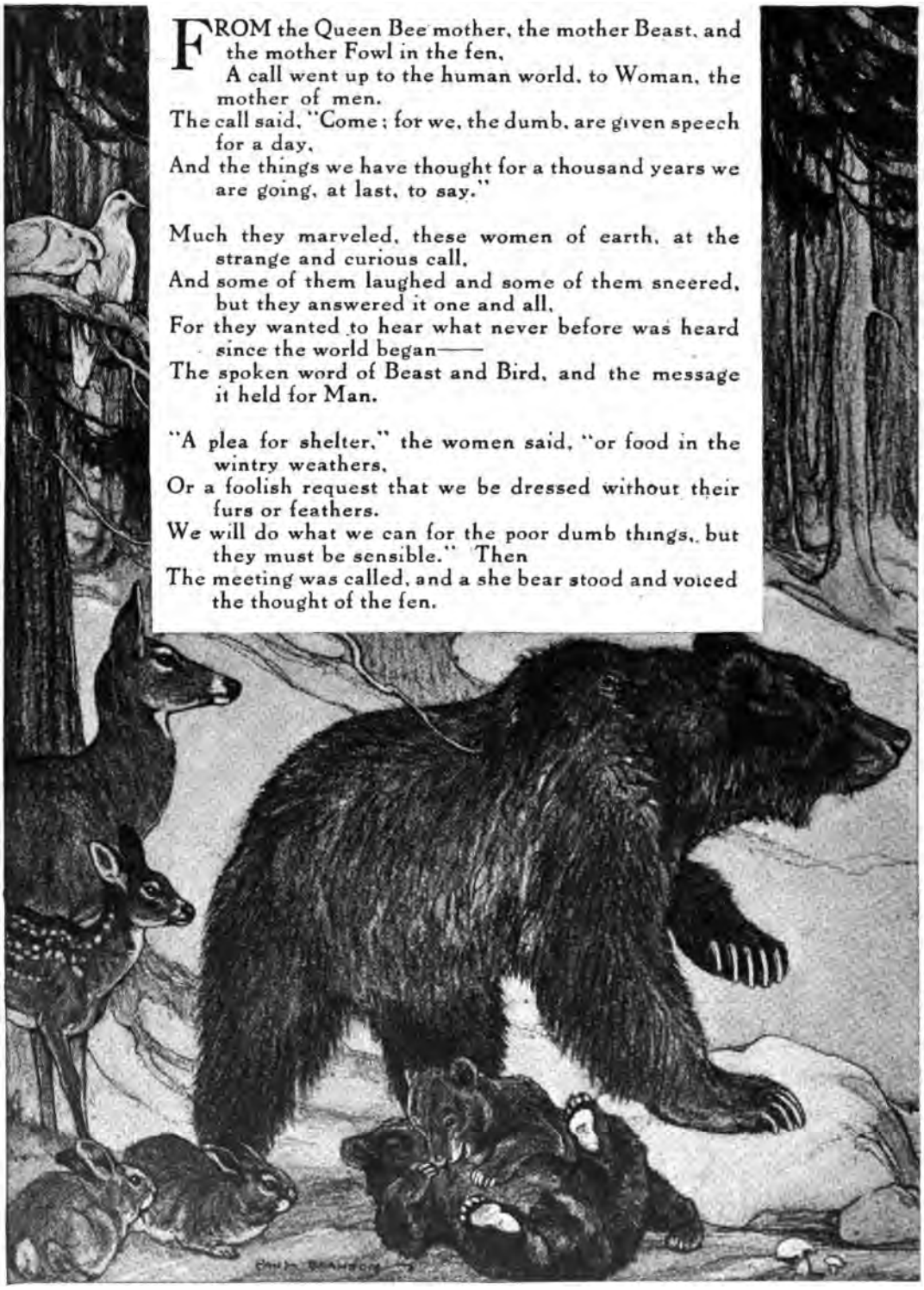
The Convention



FROM the Queen Bee mother, the mother Beast, and the mother Fowl in the fen,
A call went up to the human world, to Woman, the mother of men.
The call said, "Come; for we, the dumb, are given speech for a day,
And the things we have thought for a thousand years we are going, at last, to say."

Much they marveled, these women of earth, at the strange and curious call,
And some of them laughed and some of them sneered, but they answered it one and all,
For they wanted to hear what never before was heard since the world began——
The spoken word of Beast and Bird, and the message it held for Man.

"A plea for shelter," the women said, "or food in the wintry weathers,
Or a foolish request that we be dressed without their furs or feathers.
We will do what we can for the poor dumb things, but they must be sensible." Then
The meeting was called, and a she bear stood and voiced the thought of the fen.

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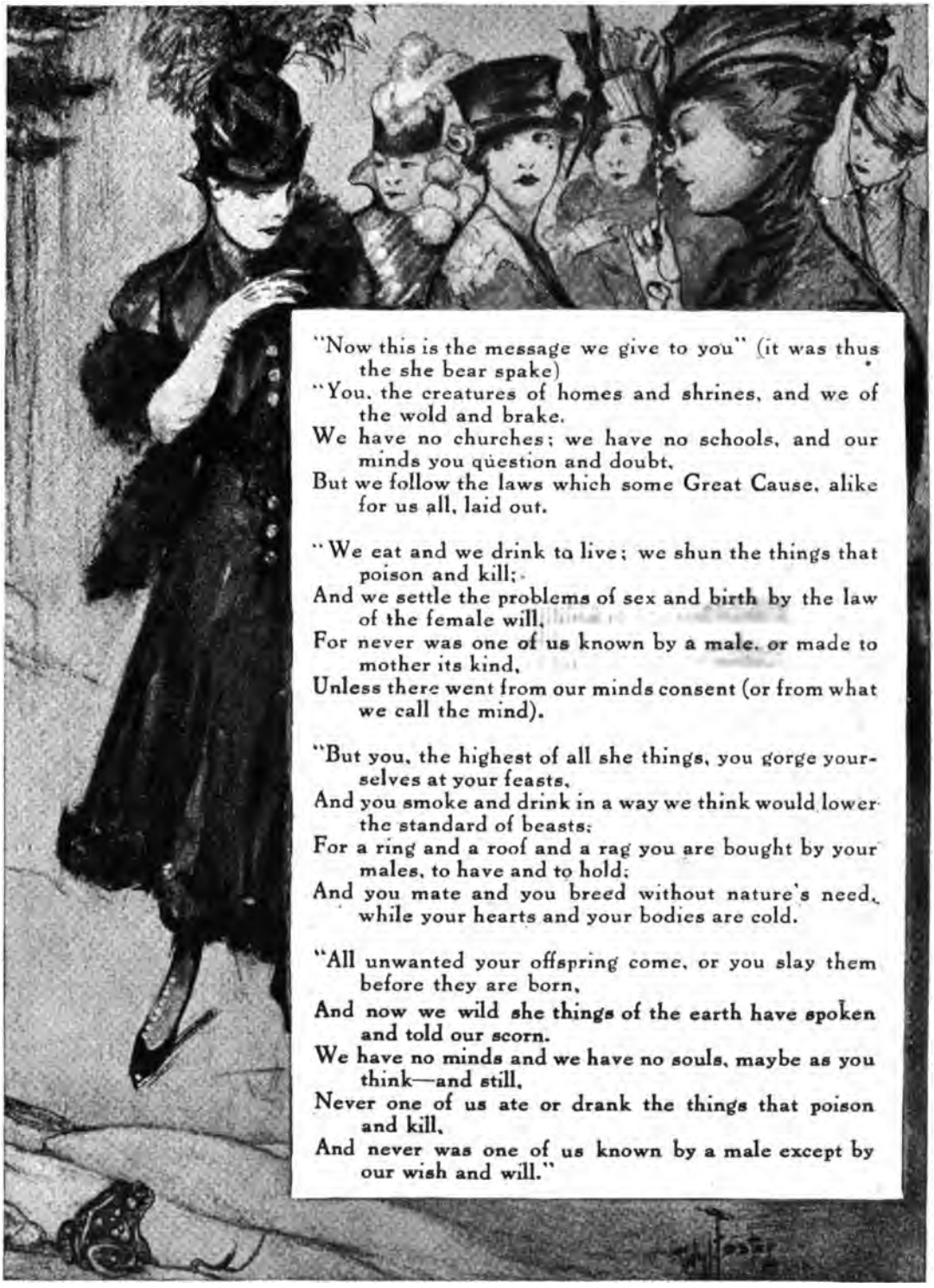

"Now this is the message we give to you" (it was thus
the she bear spake)
"You, the creatures of homes and shrines, and we of
the wold and brake.
We have no churches; we have no schools, and our
minds you question and doubt,
But we follow the laws which some Great Cause, alike
for us all, laid out.

"We eat and we drink to live; we shun the things that
poison and kill;
And we settle the problems of sex and birth by the law
of the female will,
For never was one of us known by a male, or made to
mother its kind,
Unless there went from our minds consent (or from what
we call the mind).

"But you, the highest of all she things, you gorge your-
selves at your feasts,
And you smoke and drink in a way we think would lower
the standard of beasts;
For a ring and a roof and a rag you are bought by your
males, to have and to hold;
And you mate and you breed without nature's need,
while your hearts and your bodies are cold.

"All unwanted your offspring come, or you slay them
before they are born,
And now we wild she things of the earth have spoken
and told our scorn.
We have no minds and we have no souls, maybe as you
think—and still,
Never one of us ate or drank the things that poison
and kill,
And never was one of us known by a male except by
our wish and will."

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WE TWO

WE two make home of any place we go;
We two find joy in any kind of weather;
Or if the earth is clothed in bloom or snow,
If Summer days invite or bleak winds blow,
What matters it if we two are together?
We two, we two, we make our world, our weather.

We two make banquets of the plainest fare;
In every cup we find the thrill of pleasure;
We hide with wreaths the furrowed brow of care
And win to smiles the set lips of despair.
For us life always moves with lilting measure;
We two, we two, we make our world, our pleasure.

We two find youth renewed with every dawn;
Each day holds something of an unknown glory.
We waste no thought on grief or pleasure gone;
Tricked out like Hope, Time leads us on and on,
And thrums upon his harp new song or story.
We two we two, we find the paths of glory.

We two make heaven here on this little earth;
We do not need to wait for realms eternal.
We know the use of tears, know sorrow's worth,
And pain for us is always love's rebirth.
Our paths lead closely by the paths supernal;
We two, we two, we live in love eternal.

ON AVON'S BREAST I SAW A STATELY SWAN

One day when England's June was at its best,
I saw a stately and imperious swan
Floating on Avon's fair untroubled breast.
Sudden, it seemed as if all strife had gone
Out of the world; all discord, all unrest.

The sorrows and the sinnings of the race
Faded away like nightmares in the dawn.
All heaven was one blue background for the grace
Of Avon's beautiful, slow-moving swan;
And earth held nothing mean or commonplace.

Life seemed no longer to be hurrying on
With unbecoming haste; but softly trod,
As one who reads in emerald leaf, or lawn,
Or crimson rose a message straight from God.

. . . . . .

On Avon's breast I saw a stately swan.

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THE TECHNIQUE OF IMMORTALITY

THERE hangs a picture on my wall;
Three leafless trees; dead woods beyond;
Brown grasses and a marshy pond;
And over all
An amber sunset of late fall.

Too frail the artist heart to cope
With all the stern demands of fame.
He passed before he won a name,
Or gained his hope,
To realms where dreams have larger scope.

Yet in the modest little square
Of canvas, that I daily see,
He left a legacy to me
Of something rare;
Far more than what is painted there.

For tree and grass and sunset sky
Hold subtler qualities than art.
It is the painter's pulsing heart
That seems to cry,
"I loved these things—they cannot die."

And so they live; to stir and move
Each gazer's soul; because they speak
Of something mightier than technique.
They live to prove
The immortality of love.

They speak this message day by day;
"Love, love your work, or small or great;
Love, love, and leave the rest to fate.
For love will stay
When all things else have passed away."

THE BIRTH OF THE ORCHID

Wrapped in her robe of amethyst
Rose the young Dawn.
Pallid with passion came the Mist,
And followed on
Fleet as a fawn.
Down by the sea they clasped and kissed;
Swooned the young Dawn.

Out of that kiss of dew and flame
The orchid came.

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THE SPINSTER

I

HERE are the orchard trees all large with fruit;
And yonder fields are golden with young grain.
In little journeys, branchward from the nest,
A mother bird, with sweet, insistent cries,
Urges her young to use their untried wings.
A purring Tabby, stretched upon the sward,
Shuts and expands her velvet paws in joy,
While sturdy kittens nuzzle at her breast.

O mighty Maker of the Universe,
Am I not part and parcel of Thy World?
And one with Nature? Wherefore, then, in me
Must this great reproductive impulse lie
Hidden, ashamed, unnourished, and denied,
Until it starves to slow and tortuous death?
I knew the hope of springtime; like the tree
Now ripe with fruit, I budded, and then bloomed;
We laughed together through the young May morns;
We dreamed together through the summer moons;
Till all Thy purposes within the tree
Were to fruition brought. Lord, Thou hast heard
The Woman in me crying for the Man;
The Mother in me crying for the Child;
And made no answer. Am I less to Thee
Than lower forms of Nature, or in truth
Dost Thou hold somewhere in another Realm
Full compensation and large recompense
For lonely virtue forced by fate to live
A life unnatural, in a natural world?

II

Thou who hast made for such sure purposes
The mightiest and the meanest thing that is—
Planned out the lives of insects of the air
With fine precision and consummate care;
Thou who hast taught the bee the secret power
Of carrying on love's laws 'twixt flower and flower;
Why didst Thou shape this mortal frame of mine,
If Heavenly joys alone were Thy design?
Wherefore the wonder of my woman's breast,
By lips of lover and of babe unpressed,
If spirit children only shall reply
Unto my ever urgent mother cry?
Why should the rose be guided to its own,
And my love-craving heart beat on alone?

III

Yet do I understand; for Thou hast made
Something more subtle than this heart of me;
A finer part of me
To be obeyed.

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Albeit I am a sister to the earth,
This nature self is not the whole of me;
The deathless soul of me
Has nobler birth.

The primal woman hungers for the man;
My better self demands the mate of me;
The spirit fate of me,
Part of Thy plan.

Nature is instinct with the mother-need;
So is my heart; but ah, the child of me
Should, undefiled of me,
Spring from love's seed.

And if, in barren chastity, I must
Know but in dreams that perfect choice of me,
Still will the voice of me
Proclaim God just.

STAIRWAYS AND GARDENS

Gardens and Stairways; those are words that thrill me
Always with vague suggestions of delight.
Stairways and Gardens. Mystery and grace
Seem part of their environment; they fill me
With memories of things veiled from my sight
In some far place.

Gardens. The word is overcharged with meaning;
It speaks of moonlight and a closing door;
Of birds at dawn—of sultry afternoons.
Gardens. I seem to see low branches screening
A vine-roofed arbor with a leaf-tiled floor
Where sunlight swoons.

Stairways. The word winds upward to a landing,
Then curves and vanishes in space above.
Lights fall, lights rise; soft lights that meet and blend.
Stairways; and some one at the bottom standing
Expectantly with lifted looks of love.
Then steps descend.

Gardens and Stairways. They belong with song—
With subtle scents of perfume, myrrh and musk—
With dawn and dusk—with youth, romance, and mystery,
And times that were and times that are to be.
Stairways and gardens.

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THE BLASPHEMY

THERE must be lonely moments when God feels
The need of prayer——
Such lonely moments, knowing not any where.
In any spot or place,
In all the far recesses of vast space,
Dwells anyone to whom His prayers may rise.
And then, methinks—so urgent is His need—
God bids His prayers descend.
He that has ears to hear, let him take heed,
For much God's prayers portend.

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# of GUNS

God flings His solar system forth to be
Finished by beings who befit each sphere.
Not ours to pry the secrets out of Mars;
Our work lies here.
To star-folk, leave the stars.

There must be many worlds that give God care:
Young worlds that glow and burn,
Old worlds that freeze and fade.
This world is man's concern.
Methinks God must be very much dismayed,
Seeing the use we make of earth to-day,
While loud we pray.

Last night, in sleep, beyond the earth's small zone,
Adventurously my spirit went alone,
Past lesser hells and heavens, where souls may pause
To learn the meaning of death's larger laws,
Past astral shapes and bodies of desire,
Past angels and archangels, high and higher,

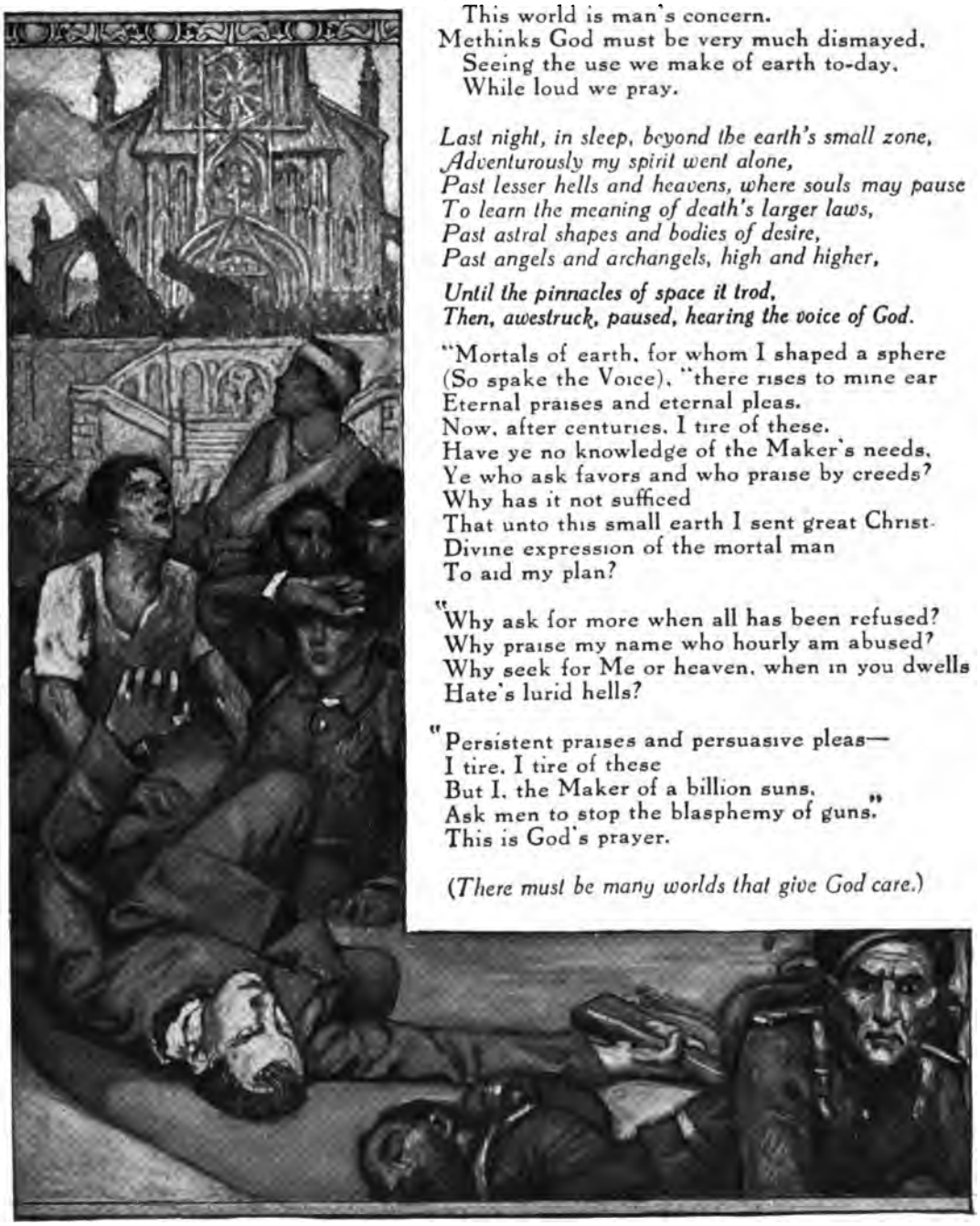
Until the pinnacles of space it trod,
Then, awestruck, paused, hearing the voice of God.

"Mortals of earth, for whom I shaped a sphere
(So spake the Voice), "there rises to mine ear
Eternal praises and eternal pleas.
Now, after centuries, I tire of these.
Have ye no knowledge of the Maker's needs,
Ye who ask favors and who praise by creeds?
Why has it not sufficed
That unto this small earth I sent great Christ
Divine expression of the mortal man
To aid my plan?

"Why ask for more when all has been refused?
Why praise my name who hourly am abused?
Why seek for Me or heaven, when in you dwells
Hate's lurid hells?

"Persistent praises and persuasive pleas—
I tire, I tire of these
But I, the Maker of a billion suns,
Ask men to stop the blasphemy of guns."
This is God's prayer.

(*There must be many worlds that give God care.*)



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THE FAITH WE NEED

TOO tall our structures and too swift our pace;
Not so we mount, not so we gain the race.
Too loud the voice of commerce in the land;
Not so truth speaks, not so we understand.
Too vast our conquests, and too large our gains;
Not so comes peace, not so the soul attains.

But the need of the world is a faith that will live anywhere;
In the still, dark depths of the woods, or out in the sun's full glare.
A faith that can hear God's voice, alike in the quiet glen,
Or in the roar of the street, and over the noises of men.

And the need of the world is a creed that is founded on joy;
A creed with turrets of hope and trust, no winds can destroy;
A creed where the soul finds rest, whatever this life bestows,
And dwells undoubting and unafraid, because it knows, it knows.

And the need of the world is love that burns in the heart like flame;
A love for the Giver of life, in sorrow or joy the same;
A love that blazes a trail to God through the dark and the cold,
Or keeps the pathway that leads to Him clean, through glory and gold.

For the faith that can only thrive or grow in the solitude,
And droops and dies in the marts of men, where sights and sounds are rude;
That is not a faith at all, but a dream of a mystic's heart.
Our faith should point as the compass points, whatever be the chart.

Our faith must find its centre of peace in a babel of noise;
In the changing ways of the world of men it must keep its poise;
And over the sorrowing sounds of earth it must hear God's call;
And the faith that cannot do all this, that is not faith at all.

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REINCARNATION

HE slept as weary toilers do,
She gazed up at the moon.
He stirred and said, "Wife, come to bed";
She answered, "Soon, full soon."
(Oh! that strange mystery of the dead moon's face.)

Her cheek was wan, her wistful mouth
Was lifted like a cup:
The moonful night dripped liquid light:
She seemed to quaff it up.
(Oh! that unburied corpse that lies in space.)

Her life had held but drudgery—
She spelled her Bible through;
Of books and lore she knew no more
Than little children do.
(Oh! the weird wonder of that pallid sphere.)

Her youth had been a loveless waste,
Starred by no holiday.
And she had wed for roof, and bread;
She gave her work in pay.
(Oh! the moon-memories, vague and strange and dear.)

She drank the night's insidious wine,
And saw another scene;
A stately room—rare flowers in bloom,
Herself in silken sheen.
(Oh! vast the chambers of the moon, and wide.)

A step drew near, a curtain stirred;
She shook with great alarms.
Oh! splendid face; oh! manly grace;
Oh! strong impassioned arms.
(Oh! silent moon, what secrets do you hide!)

The warm red lips of thirsting love
On cheek and brow were pressed;
As the bees know where honeys grow,
They sought her mouth, her breast.
(Oh! the dead moon holds many a dead delight.)

The sleeper stirred and gruffly spake,
"Come, wife, where have you been?"
She whispered low, "Dear God, I go—
But 'tis the seventh sin."
(Oh, the sad secrets of that orb of white.)

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A RAINY NIGHT

WHEN the fingers of rain on the window pane
Tap, tap, tap,
And the feet of the rain run over the roof
In the dark of a summer night,
Then out of their graves old memories creep
And they steal up into the house of sleep
And they rap, rap, rap
On the door of the heart till it sets a light
And opens the portal and spreads the board
For the waiting horde.

Then the great wide world seems all astir
With the ghostly shapes of the things that were.
A Pleasure that perished, a dead Despair,
An old Delight and a vanished Care,
A Passion that builded its funeral pyre,
From the worthless timber of brief desire,
A Hope that wandered and lost its way
In the dazzling beams of its own bright ray,
With long gone Worries and long lost Joys
Come stealthily creeping with never a noise
(For the things that have gone on the road to God,
When they turn back earthward are silence-shod);
And they enter the heart's great living room
When the rain beats down from a sky of gloom
In the dark of a summer night.

And they tell old tales and they sing old songs
That are sweet, sweet, sweet;
While the fingers of rain on the window pane
Beat, beat, beat.
And they feast on the past and drink its wine
And call it a brew divine.

But when in the east the darkness pales
And the edge of the clouds show light,
The ghosts go back with a silent tread
And only the heart knows what they said
In the dark of the summer night.

REWARD

Fate used me meanly; but I looked at her and laughed,
That none might know how bitter was the cup I quaffed.
Along came Joy, and paused beside me where I sat,
Saying, "I came to see what you were laughing at."

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